ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE THEORY AND THE DYNAMICS OF PARTICIPANT-CONSTRUCTED INNOVATIONS: IMPLEMENTING SHARED DECISION MAKING

By

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ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE THEORY AND PARTICIPANT-CONSTRUCTED INNOVATIONS: IMPLEMENTING SHARED DECISION MAKING

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Shared decision making (SDM) is a school reform effort that requires collaboration among a school's stakeholders. Stakeholders must construct the meaning and parameters of SDM for their school and then use SDM to facilitate school improvements. I have characterized SDM as a participant-constructed innovation and differentiated it from top-down, expert-driven innovations of the past. Although SDM is a promising avenue for school improvement, successful implementation is documented in only a few cases.

I have documented the successful implementation of SDM at Neptune High School and studied the experience within the context of organizational change theory. The primary question guiding the study was: What organizational change theory helps us understand what happened during the adoption and implementation of SDM at Neptune High School?

I compared the Neptune experience to Everett Roger's model of organizational change and found the model did not explain what happened. The experiences of the Neptune stakeholders and a compilation of stumbling blocks and facilitating factors from the organizational change and SDM literature contributed to a greater understanding of Neptune's experience. Analysis of the experience through the lens of Michael Fullan's constructivist approach to organizational change further clarified the process of successful SDM adoption and implementation.

Over a three-year period from February 1990 to December 1992, I gathered data from 165 personal interviews with teachers, administrators, parents, students, and non-instructional staff members. Most interviews were conducted during six visits to the campus. Additional data included notes from observations, minutes and videotapes of meetings, documents produced at the school, survey data, and demographic data. I used qualitative case study methodology to collect and analyze data.

Findings of the study suggest a theory of constructivist organizational change. Elements of a proposed model and a rationale for each element are included.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Representatives of the business community are demanding that our schools produce a skillful workforce capable of meeting the challenge of foreign competition (Kearns, 1988; Schlechty, 1990). Politicians are demanding an educational process that is accountable to the public through such programs such as school choice, national goals, and national exams (National Governors Association, 1991). Educators want to create schools in which the multi-faceted needs of a diverse student population can be met (Adler, 1982; Apple, 1988; Sizer, 1984). Of course, every call for change represents the particular agenda of one interest group or another.

One proposed process for addressing the goals of diverse interests is shared decision making (SDM). Within the business community, many managers believe that the practice of empowering employees to make decisions that directly affect their work is positively correlated with better products and improved competitiveness (Kanter, 1983; Morgan, 1988; Ouchi, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Some (but certainly not all) politicians support SDM. Among the politicians who do support SDM, accountability is cited as the anticipated benefit: School stakeholders make decisions and are held accountable for the results (Guthrie, 1986; New York City Board of Education, 1990). Many educators support SDM for both practical and philosophical reasons. Some believe that schools will more effectively meet the needs of all students as teachers become more involved in decisions (David, 1989a; Guthrie, 1986; Lieberman, 1988; Smith & Purkey, 1985). Others argue for SDM as the only appropriate model for schools in which preparation for citizenship in a democracy is a generally agreed upon goal (Fazal, 1986; Shedd & Bacharach, 1991).

Even though SDM seems to be a promising way to effect change in schools, implementating SDM has been difficult. A shift in decision making from a bureaucratic hierarchy to a collaborative effort involving school stakeholders is documented in only a few cases (Clune & White, 1988; Kessler, 1992; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990; Sickler, 1988). Difficulty in implementing SDM persists in spite of 30 years of research in organizational change and a well-developed organizational change theory (Fullan & Miles, 1992; Havelock, 1971; Rogers, 1983; Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992; Turnbull, 1992). Organizational change theory, when examined in the context of restructuring schools through SDM, may not explain or address the problems encountered in the adoption and implementation process.

If SDM is to fulfill its potential for facilitating changes in education, researchers and educators must begin to develop a theoretical base to explain the adoption and implementation process. In order to contribute to that theoretical base, I have studied one high school that appears to be making significant progress toward implementing SDM. Over a period of three years, the school community organized itself to make decisions collaboratively, witnessed the emergence of new leaders, included many stakeholders, identified and ranked concerns, decided on solutions to address those concerns, and began to implement solutions. Many faculty members, administrators, parents, and students believe these changes are having a positive impact on student achievement.

Because SDM is a participant-constructed innovation, the school community has also been engaged in the process of defining the meaning and dimensions of shared decision making. I have documented this school's experience in order to determine whether organizational change theory, as presently articulated, explains what happened or whether a modification of that theory is necessary to explain the implementation of SDM, an open-ended, participant-constructed innovation. The broad question that guided the study was this: What organizational change theory helps us understand what happens when a school community adopts and implements SDM?

Assumptions and Definitions

Two assumptions undergirded this study. The first is that SDM is representative of a genre of innovations that I characterize as "participant-constructed." Innovations in this category require the participants to engage in defining the meaning and dimensions of the innovation. The second assumption is that the constructivist nature of the innovation may not be explained by existing theory. The assumptions stated here are different from the assumptions that undergird traditional organizational change theory and suggest the need for theory that helps explain what happens as schools attempt to implement SDM or other participant-constructed innovations.

A growing number of educational innovations fall into the category of participant-constructed innovations: accelerated schools, professional development schools, whole language, the Coalition of Essential Schools, and shared decision making. Innovations such as these represent a new generation of reforms, and they share the common element of involving participants in the construction of the innovation. Participants may, or may not, be given underlying principles, goals, or parameters to guide their work. Process and participation, rather than simply results, are the key elements in participant-constructed innnovations. Constructed innovations are designed to empower the participants for long-term, reflective, and adaptive change.

Shared decision making is an example of a participant-constructed innovation and will serve in this study as a surrogate for this genre of school reforms. School people embarking on the implementation of SDM are given a mandate to increase stakeholder participation, but the specifics of implementation often remain unstated. The concept of SDM itself may be undefined, the goals may be unclear, the types of decisions to be included may be unspecified, and the procedures for making decisions may be left up to the participants. The level of ambiguity may vary among the different kinds of participant-constructed innovations, but SDM will be studied as a prime example of the genre.

Educational innovations have traditionally been developed by experts and delivered pre-packaged for teachers to implement. Examples of such innovations include basal reading programs, teacher-proof instructional materials, assertive discipline, and diagnostic/prescriptive teaching strategies.

The words "change" and "innovation" are at the heart of this study. In this study, "change" refers to the process of adopting and implementing an innovation. An innovation is an intended change that requires learning new skills and new behaviors. The change process documented in the study took place as one school community (to be called Neptune

High School) attempted to implement a specific innovation, shared decision making.

Shared decision making (SDM) is a process that has evolved as an outgrowth of the school-based management movement. Unlike most innovations, SDM is not pre-packaged. It is an open-ended, participant-constructed innovation. That is, the participants implement an innovation that they themselves define. In each district, in each school, the meaning and parameters of shared decision making must be constructed by those implementing the program.

Background

Researchers from several different disciplines have studied organizational change and some of their work may help explain implemention of SDM. For example, researchers have identified concrete strategies for facilitating change efforts by providing appropriate training for new skills (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Fullan, 1985; Hall & Hord, 1987; Joyce & Showers, 1983). To the extent that learning new skills is part of the implementation process, this cross-disciplinary research has implications for the implementation of SDM. A problem emerges when the research in organizational change theory is applied to schools implementing SDM. That problem provided impetus for the study.

A shortcoming in the organizational change research, which derives from disciplines as diverse as business, rural sociology, communications, and medicine, is that it has been directed toward the implementation of pre-packaged innovations from the Research-Development-Diffusion (RD&D) tradition (Turnbull, 1992). The RD&D model of change has been invaluable in facilitating the spread of important medical and agricultural innovations (Rogers, 1983), but it is not without problems. With the RD&D model, experts develop a solution to a problem and attempt to diffuse that solution through a particular population. Participants and experts alike assume that innovations created by experts through research and development are inherently sound. Experts expect that people in the target population will see the wisdom of the innovation and will adopt it. But the RD&D model and pre-packaged solutions too often fail to empower the recipients for ongoing reflection and adaptation.

Another shortcoming of the organizational change research has been that researchers and agencies sponsoring change have routinely failed to attend to the consequences of innovations (Rogers, 1983). A lack of concern about the consequences of changes can be tied directly to the structure for change that has outside experts designing solutions for local implementation.

The structure of the RD&D tradition of change can be problematic when it is operationalized in schools and has the effect of continuing the view of educators as passive recipients of the change efforts of others. The RD&D tradition, with its emphasis on the "how-to" types of change that teachers know so well, remains the standard for staff development (Hall & Hord, 1987). "The traditional model of school improvement pits experts against practitioners and suggests that knowledge comes from experts and is to be handed to practitioners" (Sirotnik & Clark, 1988, p. 661). The transfer of knowledge generally comes in the form of training sessions for inservice teachers.

The ubiquitous "inservice" is an inescapable fact of life for teachers. Possible formats run the gamut from one hour how-to sessions to every-Wednesday-afternoon-for-a-year sessions. Whatever the format, an outside "expert" comes into a school to tell teachers how to do things better, to correct teachers' "deficiencies." Jean Rudduck (1991) encountered this deficit model of change in schools and shared these images:

> One is the idea of pupils and teachers as conscripts in the innovative campaigns launched by others; the second is the idea of pupils and teachers as puppets, dancing on the strings of other people's visions; and the third is of teachers and pupils as curriculum actors whose fate it is to act out the plots that other people have written. (p. 21)

Curiously enough, with all the inservice and all the research into how people and organizations change, not much has changed in schools. The student populations being served by schools have changed, but schools are in many ways much as they were at the turn of the century. At the same time, substantive problems that have attracted public attention (illiteracy, a-literacy, innumeracy, declining test scores, high dropout rates, continuing cycles of poverty) have not been affected by targeted interventions (Cuban, 1983; Fullan, 1985).

Of course, it is possible to point to innovations that have been successfully implemented. Kirst and Meister (1985) analyzed changes in American education over a 68-year-period to identify the characteristics of changes that caused some to last and others to be rejected. Reforms that are likely to endure are characterized by (a) new physical or organizational structures, (b) powerful constituencies, and (c) easily accessible evidence of compliance. Examples of successfully implemented changes include federal remedial pull-out programs and special classes for handicapped and gifted students, programs that have specialized teachers and mountains of documentation. Changes are likely to be unsuccessful if they require teachers to alter their established teaching practices (Kirst & Meister, 1985). Changes that have not been wholly implemented were those that focused on the classroom, innovations such as "new math," science inquiry, team teaching, open classrooms, and individualized instruction. Research in education has diffused slowly into the American classroom, and teacher resistance is often cited as a stumbling block in the diffusion process (Turnbull, 1992), but it would require a cynical view of teachers to believe that they either cannot or will not make substantive changes that will benefit their students.

Recent literature on school change suggests that substantive changes in schools must be rooted in the recognition that change is not simply a technical problem, but rather a cultural problem that requires attention to context and to the creation of shared meanings within working groups (Fullan, 1991; Rudduck, 1991). Fullan wrote that substantive, or "true," change is internalized, institutionalized, and results in new ways of thinking and behaving. He suggested that educators will adopt an innovation, and achieve true change, when they have individually and collectively addressed and reconciled the issues of who benefits and whether or not the innovation is educationally and technically sound. The issues of benefit and soundness, and the attention to discovering shared meaning seem to be particularly relevant to the process of implementing shared decision making, a process characterized by ambiguity and uncertainty.

Because change theory researchers have focused primarily on the implementation of pre-packaged innovations in the RD&D tradition, they have neither identified the factors that contribute to successful implementation of constructed innovations nor developed a theory to explain the implementation process. With this study, I have documented the adoption and implementation of SDM and sought a theoretical base to predict and explain the experience.

Questions Guiding the Study

The broad question guiding this study is this: What organizational change theory helps us understand what happens when a school community adopts and implements SDM? In order to address that question, I posed these facilitating questions: To what extent does the Neptune experience fit a traditional model of organizational change? To what extent does the Neptune experience confirm variables for success or failure identified in the organizational change and SDM literature? Does a constructivist approach to organizational change help us understand the Neptune experience? What are the elements of a change theory that explains the adoption and implementation of SDM, a constructed innovation?

Supplemental questions guided the study and provided a framework for documenting the adoption and implementation process, reviewing organizational change theory within the context of SDM, and exploring the potential expansion of the theoretical base. The first set of questions guided documentation of the change process: What happened as this school community adopted and implemented SDM? What factors facilitated or hindered the process?

The second category of questions set the stage for examining organizational change theory within the context of implementing SDM in a school: Can the events associated with adoption and implementation of SDM at Neptune High School be explained by Rogers' (1983) traditional model of organizational change? Did events arise that cannot be explained by the model?

The third category of questions explores the role of a constructivist approach (represented by the work of Fullan, 1991) in explaining the Neptune experience. Fullan expressed a belief that teachers are capable of exposing and rejecting innovations that have dubious benefits and questionable merit. Teachers must construct the meaning of change for their own situation. Fullan suggested that substantive changes would result when teachers themselves reached consensus, or "shared meaning," on these key issues: Who benefits? Is this program educationally and technically sound?

Need for the Study

Educational organizations attempting to implement SDM are experiencing difficulty (David, 1989; Mutchler, 1989; Weiss, 1991; Wirth, 1991). Although a body of research in organizational change theory exists, it needs to be examined within the context of schools and SDM to see if it explains the difficulty of implementing this open-ended, participant-constructed innovation.

Rogers (1983) identified several shortcomings of diffusion research (a term used here interchangeably with "change" research) and proposed a research agenda to address those shortcomings. In his criticism of the research, Rogers explained the pro-innovation bias, the individual blame bias, and the recall problem. The pro-innovation bias was evident in the implication that the innovations studied should be adopted, and adopted rapidly. The individual blame bias permitted researchers to view slow adopters (referred to as laggards) as deficient, and diverted attention from deficiencies that might exist in the innovation itself or in the situation in which the innovation was to be implemented. A recall problem existed as well, due to the post hoc nature of studies that depended on the participants' memory of how and when they decided to adopt an innovation.

Rogers proposed an agenda for addressing the shortcomings of change research. He called for longitudinal studies in which researchers document the change process as it happens and interview participants as events unfold, thereby avoiding the recall problem. He suggested that change researchers adopt the anthropological tradition of in-depth case studies, studies that include field work, interviews with multiple participants, and an attempt to understand the innovation from the participants' perspective, thus addressing the pro-innovation and individual blame biases. Other researchers have also called for in-depth, longitudinal studies (Conley, 1989; Damapour, 1988; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Prestine, 1992).

This study is a response in form and substance to the research agenda suggested by Rogers and other organizational change researchers. Qualitative case study methodology provided the framework for this in-depth, longitudinal study. Over three years, from the spring of 1990 through the spring of 1993, my research partner and I visited the school six times and conducted 165 interviews. My analysis helped me understand the Neptune experience from the stakeholders' point of view. In the following chapters, I share that understanding to address the need for learning more about the experience of adopting and implementing SDM in schools.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature reviewed for this study falls into three interrelated categories: organizational theory, change theory, and shared decision making (SDM) studies. The first topic reviewed is organizational theory, with a focus on organizational factors that can reasonably apply to the implementation of SDM in a school. The review lays the foundation for the analysis of organizational characteristics that affect the change process, and builds a bridge between organizational theories and change theories.

Next, a review of the literature on organizational change focuses on three topics: Rogers' (1983) change model (a model that represents traditional research in organizational change theory), Fullan's (1991) constructivist approach to organizational change, and a survey (from reports of organizational change efforts) of factors that facilitate or hinder change.

Finally, studies and essays on participatory decision making are reviewed. A small but growing body of literature describes SDM projects, and findings from those studies provide a basis for evaluating the Neptune experience.

Organizational Theory

Mittermeyer (1990) contended that an integrated body of organizational theory does not exist. Researchers in many disciplines are interested in the study of organizations, and the multi-disciplinary approach to organizational analysis has contributed to "a bewildering array of competing and contradictory theories of organizations" (Skrtic, 1991, p. 149).

Rather than attempting to review and analyze the "bewildering array" of studies on organizations, I have reviewed studies that deal with variables relevant to the implementation of SDM. The organizational variables most often cited in relation to an organization's ability to adapt to changing conditions include organizational context, structure, characteristics, and culture.

Organizational context

Organizational context refers to the institutional environment, the relationship between the school organization and other organizations. Schools are imbedded in their history and in the history of organizations in their environment. It is no accident that classrooms across America and across decades look remarkably alike (Goodlad, 1984).

A brief history of organizations may explain how school organizations have become as they are. In "The Short and Glorious History of Organization Theory" (Morgan, 1988), Charles Perrow provided a succinct overview of organizational theory development. Perrow's historical overview, which was consistent with other OT writers, described the evolution of organizational theory through three fairly distinct phases from 1900-1970. Each era of organizational history reflected a particular view of human potential and how that potential might best be manipulated for optimum efficiency. The following historical overview draws primarily from Perrow.

During the Classical/Traditional era of organizational theory, in the early part of the 20th century, industrialists adopted systems of mass production and assembly in order to increase profits. These industrialists viewed Frederick Taylor's scientific management as particularly appropriate for their purposes. Using Taylor's methods, managers measured and standardized tasks, set goals, planned, and supervised, while workers did as they were told (Morgan, 1988). "Scientific management had a profound and long-lasting impact on the ways in which schools were organized and administered" (Owens, 1991, p. 7), as school superintendents adopted the values and practices of scientific management for application in schools.

Organizational theorists from the Classical/Traditional era influenced schools as well. The influence of Fayol, who emphasized the strong, well-trained managerial corps, is evident in the almost universal model of hierarchical school organizations. The influence of Max Weber, who described the efficiency potential of bureaucracies, is evident in the bureaucratic structure of school systems. Interestingly, the practices of the Classical/Traditional era fell from favor in the business world (but not in schools) around 1935, when the Human Relations era began.

During the Human Relations era of organizations, 1935-1950, employers became interested in the social and psychological needs of employees. Management's goal was to gain maximum production and loyalty from employees, but a result of the Human Relations movement was the creation of more pleasant workplaces. Within those workplaces, however, managers still did the thinking while workers did as they were told (Miles & Snow, 1978). The Human Relations movement had little direct influence on schools (Owens, 1991). Shedd and Bacharach (1991), however, suggested that the practice of employee manipulation that was a characteristic of the movement could account for residual cynicism among teachers toward organizational structures borrowed from business (e.g. SDM).

The Human Relations era was followed by the Human Resources era, characterized by organizations in which managers viewed every member of the organization as a valuable resource. The goal of management, as in the previous era, was to extract maximum productivity and loyalty from employees. Managers came to believe that better decisions were made when information came directly from workers most closely associated with clients or with the work process itself. Further, they came to see that more ideas from more perspectives produced better decisions. Employees involved in the decision making process were able to rapidly identify and address problems and opportunities in the environment.

The evolution of management style from hierarchical to collaborative was due primarily to the need for modern industries to remain competitive in quickly changing markets. With open communication, flexibility, and adaptability, companies were more likely to compete successfully. The imperative for collaboration, taken from industry and applied to schools, fits very well. Schools must address an ever-changing array of problems and needs while providing a consistently good educational program. Experience in business and industry indicates that participatory decision making is a way to tap a reservoir of skills, knowledge, and insight possessed by the stakeholders at each school.

Until recently, schools were bypassed in the evolution of organizations beyond the Classical era. The move toward

SDM probably has some foundation in the Human Resources movement, and in that way schools may be moving into the mainstream of organizations in general.

Viewing an organization within the context of other organizations in its environment is one way to understand its ability to adapt to change. Another element affecting adaptability is the specific structure that has evolved in an organization.

Structure

Modeled on the traditional, hierarchical organizations of another era, schools provide a particular kind of setting for education. Thomas Skrtic (1991) presented a view of organizations as shapers of social goals. That is, the nature of the organization created to address a social goal affects the goal itself. When the goal is education, what society gets is a "particular kind of schooling, one shaped by the particular kind of organization used as the mechanism to provide it" (p. 144). The structure of the school affects and becomes part of the education received by students in the school (McNeil, 1986). The structure of schools evolved in part through patterns of decisions, as described by Shedd and Bacharach (1991):

> Hierarchical subordination, control, and passivity . . . have become values that permeate school systems and that influence decisions at every level. How administrators treat teachers and how teachers treat students become intertwined. What is done becomes what is taught. The implication, then is obvious: If schools are to teach creativity and problem solving and

> cooperation and involvement, they must practice them, not just in the classroom but at all levels of the system. (p. 194)

Researchers have described the structure of school organizations in a variety of ways. Shedd and Bacharach (1991) referred to "tacit deals and tangled hierarchies" to describe the organization and management of most schools. Weick (1976) described them as "loosely coupled." While the organizational chart of most schools represents a hierarchical bureaucracy, decisions are often made through tacit deals between stakeholders who are loosely coupled.

With the phrase "loosely coupled," Weick described an organization that was tied together, but only loosely. The term conveys a connotation of "impermanence, dissolvability, and tacitness" (Weick, 1990, p. 3). In a school, the two elements that are loosely coupled are the technical core (teachers) and the authority of the principal.

While loose coupling of elements in an organization is neither good nor bad, a dialectic does exist. The behind-the-closed-doors nature of teaching allows for stability and persistence in a changing environment, but may foster non-selective perseverance, such as the preservation of archaic traditions. Loose coupling is a good system for fostering local adaptations, but it may not serve the goal of standardization. While novel solutions may emerge in a loosely coupled organization, the independence of people within the organization may prevent solutions from diffusing. The breakdown of a single element does not affect the entire organization if it is loosely coupled, but it may be difficult to repair a defective element. To the extent that loose coupling characterizes a school, change agents may find it difficult to change archaic traditions, diffuse good ideas, get rid of bad teachers, or plan for the rational allocation of funds.

Participatory decision making requires collegiality, adaptability, and teamwork. Those characteristics may be difficult to achieve in organizations where decisions have traditionally been made through tacit deals designed to allow opposing elements to function independently. Teachers and principals have become opposing elements through the structuring of schools into bureaucratic hierarchies. Some educators have suggested that "the existing bureaucratic model is likely not appropriate for schools" (Shroyer, 1990, p. 3).

Context and structure are variables that affect an organization's ability to adapt to changing circumstances. The characteristics and purpose of an organization also influence its ability to change.

Characteristics and Purpose

What characteristics define a group of people as an organization? By some definitions, schools barely meet the criteria to be considered organizations. Morgan (1988) defined an organization as a group of people working together for a common purpose. Everett Rogers' definition of an organization was more complex. He wrote that an organization is a "stable system of individuals who work together to achieve common goals through a hierarchy of ranks and a division of labor" (1983, p. 348). The structure of such a group is intended to promote efficiency. The stability and predictability of an organization results from having predetermined goals, prescribed roles, an authority structure, rules and regulations, and informal patterns of relationships among its members.

When Rogers' definition of an organization is applied to schools, problems become immediately apparent. For one thing, the extent to which teachers work together is debatable. Judith Warren Little (1982) described the isolation of teachers' work. With little time for collaboration, and a work culture that nurtures the practice of minding one's own business, teachers often work in isolation from one another. Further, the goals that exist are both general and diverse, with goal attainment difficult to measure (Willower, 1982). Rogers' definition may also have consequences for change efforts that specifically challenge the hierarchical structure of the organization.

Researchers have investigated a number of characteristics and contingency factors in order to gauge the effect of these factors on an organization's structure, effectiveness, and adaptability (accommodation to an organization's environment). Some of those factors were specific to the discipline within which they were studied and have little carry-over to education. Rogers described characteristics of organizations that appear to be relevant to schools. Those characteristics include centralization (the degree to which power and control are retained by relatively few individuals), complexity (the degree of knowledge and expertise among an organization's members), formalization (the degree to which following rules and regulations is emphasized), and interconnectedness of individuals in the organization. Rogers' call for a process approach to research on innovation is partially rooted in the importance he attached to studying the effects of these characteristics. Previous research revealed paradoxes. For example, high centralization and formalization were negatively related to the initiation of innovations but positively related to implementing innovations. High complexity fostered the generation of new ideas but blocked implementation of those ideas (Zaltman, 1973). The characteristics of an organization influence the change process and provide a basis for analysis, but the challenge is to find how these factors influence change.

Culture

A fourth category of organizational life that affects the abilbity to change is culture. Some organizational cultures foster innovation while other cultures inhibit it.

When Peters and Waterman (1982) synthesized their finding from an extensive study of excellent companies, they found that all of the companies had remarkably well-defined cultures that permeated every nook and cranny of the organization. The cultures of the excellent companies were consistently characterized by respect for individuals (who were seen as sources of ideas), by autonomy and entrepreneurship in environments that fostered risk-taking, and by organizational structures that were very simple, with few layers between line workers and top managers. The organizations were value-driven and the people in them were characterized by the authors as being fanatically centered on the core values they (as an organization) held dear. Peters and Waterman's work established the powerful role of culture in an organization's success and its ability to adapt to change.

It is easier to understand the power of culture in an organization than it is to expose and study it. As with social cultures, norms (unwritten rules that individuals encounter) and assumptions (the bedrock beliefs upon which norms are built) exist in organizations. Careful observation will eventually reveal the norms, but the assumptions are tacitly understood by the participants and are much more difficult to uncover (Owens & Steinhoff, 1989).

Peters and Waterman (1982) studied culture as an independent variable, and attempted to gauge the implications of culture for organizational effectiveness. Managers applying results of the studies could then consciously produce cultures shown to be correlated to adaptability and increased productivity.

Another view of organizational culture was described by Smircich (1983). She viewed culture as something an organization is, rather than something it has. She described the concept of culture as root metaphor, and promoted a view of organizations as "expressive forms, manifestations of human consciousness" (p. 347). Smircich's view portrays culture not as an independent variable but as in internal variable. Culture as an internal variable promotes a sense of identity, social system stability, a sense-making forum, and a focus on the larger good.

The power of an organization's culture to foster or inhibit change was confirmed by OT studies. The purpose of studying culture may vary across disciplines, but culture is clearly a factor to consider as an organization contemplates a change effort.

The OT research provides ways of examining the context for change and the effect of context on the change effort. The organizational change theory research focuses on the process of change in an organization. I move now to the change process itself.

Organizational Change Theory

Change can be exciting or trying, a catalyst for organizational bonding or an alienating experience, a time of transformation or an occasion to simply pretend there has been a change until the pressure is off. Change is rarely a neutral experience. Stake (1987) said, "We deal with people's lives--not only the lives of young people but of teachers. We deliberately try to change them and seldom exactly as they would change themselves. We interfere with their lives convinced we are helping them to something better" (p. 56).

Change can be as difficult to understand and explain as it is to experience. Change researchers have been working for over 30 years and their own assessment of progress is perhaps summarized by statements from researchers themselves. The first is from Berman and McLaughlin:

> The evidence suggests that...no class of existing educational treatments has been found that consistently leads to improved student outcomes. Successful projects have difficulty sustaining their success for a number of years. [The treatments] are not disseminated automatically or easily, and replication in new sites usually falls short of their performance in the original sites. (1978, pp. 1-2)

Fifteen years later, Goodstein and Burke said, "We are only beginning to understand the nature of change and how to manage the process" (1991, p. 6). Goodstein and Burke are consultants to businesses that presumably have enormous incentives to promote adaptability in their organizations. Apparently, even when the stakes are high, there is no "magic pill" when it comes to consistently and effectively facilitating change.

If there is no definitive answer to the problem of helping organizations through the change process, there is at least a body of literature that represents the work of researchers who have studied the process of change in organizations. I tap into that literature for a framework over which I can lay the Neptune experience. First, I examined a traditional model of organizational change, then a constructivist approach to organizational change, and finally factors that seem to facilitate or hinder organizational change.

A Traditional Model of Organizational Change

Organizational change theory and the models that have emerged from change theory research provide guidance for successful organizational change. Over the years, a number of models have come from that research. I selected Rogers' (1983) model of organizational change to represent the traditional approach because of Rogers' stature as a change researcher and because the model represents a "typical" model. (See Figure 1). That is, it includes the three stages found in a number of other well-known models. The stages vary from model to model, but typically include initiation, implementation, and institutionalization (Rothman & Wilson, 1988). Different researchers use different labels for each stage, but the meaning is the same from one model to the next. Rogers' model is presented in two phases, but the last stage of phase two, routinizing, amounts to a third phase.

Organizational Change Model
Initiation Phase
1. Agenda setting
2. Matching
---Decision to Adopt---
Implementation Phase
1. Re-defining/Restructuring
2. Clarifying
3. Routinizing

Figure 1. Rogers' Change Model

The initiation phase of Rogers' model includes all activities leading up to the adoption of an innovation, activities such as gathering information, conceptualizing, and planning. The first step in the initiation phase is setting the agenda, a time to define the problem and seek possible solutions. The agenda setting step in Rogers' model represents the ideal in organization change. In fact, Rogers recognizes that things do not always proceed according to the model. March (1981) noted that innovation in organizations often seemed to be driven less by problems than by solutions, that answers often preceded questions.

The second step in the initiation phase, matching, is a time to see whether a particular innovation can realistically be implemented and whether or not it will address the perceived problem. The matching process allows for adaptation of innovations to the unique circumstances of a particular organization.

The implementation phase includes the events, actions, and decisions involved in putting an innovation into use. The first step in the implementation phase is that of defining and restructuring, adapting the innovation to the situation and, if necessary, restructuring the organization to accommodate the innovation.

The second step in the implementation phase provides for a time to clarify, or more clearly define, the relationship between the organization and the innovation. Participants come to understand the innovation and its implications. Participants will undoubtedly encounter problems and must address those problems in order to provide the stability needed for making the innovation part of the organization's structure.

The final step is that of routinizing, during which the innovation becomes part of the organization. The innovation's separate identity is lost.

The steps in the model may not always occur in the order shown and the length of each step will vary with different circumstances. Also, the stages are more consistent if the innovation is imported from outside the organization (Rogers, 1983). SDM was an imported innovation at Neptune, so if the model holds true, evidence of each stage should emerge from the data.

Rogers' model was selected to represent traditional organizational change theory. The stages he included resulted from the work of diffusion scholars who "identified the main sequence of decisions, actions, and events . . . in the innovation process" (1983, p.362). According to Rogers,

> The innovation process consists of a usual sequence of five stages, each characterized by a particular range of events, actions, and decisions made at that point. Later stages in the innovation process cannot be undertaken until earlier stages have been settles, either explicitly or implicitly. (1983, p.362)

The stages identified by Rogers purport to show what actually happens in a complete and successful change process. Ample evidence exists to confirm that the stages identified by Rogers do in fact happen in the adoption and implementation of the kinds of innovations that typically reach the schools.

No model comparable to Rogers' exists to explain constructed innovations. The work characterized in the following section as a constructivist approach to change offers guidance to educators attempting change efforts, but the constructivist approach to change is not represented by a theoretical model that predicts and explains the change process. Rather, the work of researchers such as Fullan resulted from efforts to help teachers internalize the meaning of change and assume ownership of the change process.

A Constructivist Approach to Organizational Change

Because most of the literature in change theory is concerned with innovations from the RD&D tradition, it was a challenge to find research on open-ended, participant-constructed innovations. The role of "shared meaning," as defined by Fullan (1991), appears to address this gap in change theory research. While on the surface it may appear that "shared meaning" is similar to the advocacy of shared values, goals, or beliefs in order to achieve the purposes of the organization, it is probably safe to say that the "shared meaning" researchers in education are approaching the issue from a very different epistemological stance. Fullan (1991) and Rudduck (1991) presented a constructivist view of organizational change, a bedrock belief that teachers must participate in the construction of knowledge. Knowledge, in this view, does not come from management or consultants or experts, but is constructed by the participants.

It may be on the epistemological issue that the literature on organizational change from the various disciplines diverges most noticeably. Within the business, agricultural, health, and rural sociology traditions, researchers and change agents sought to discover how to get people to accept new information and change in ways that made businesses more profitable or life healthier and safer.

The change agents assumed that the changes represented knowledge and should be accepted.

Both Rudduck (1991) and Fullan (1991) had something else in mind. For them, change represented possibilities for knowledge construction rather than acceptance of knowledge from outside sources. Rudduck emphasized that opportunities must exist for collaborative analysis of the need for change, collaborative decisions about the strategies for change, and consensus on the criteria for assessing progress toward change.

Rudduck was primarily interested in curriculum changes. While conceptually similar to Fullan's work, Rudduck's work was operationalized in a more personal way. Her research method was biographical reflection, a process of reaffirmation and discovery through which individual teachers clarified their educational values, came to understand the meaning of change and their commitment to change in relation to those values, and then explored those values with colleagues. She concluded that "teachers who can claim to 'own the problem of change' are those who recognize a potentially creative dissonance that they are prepared to confront and deal with" (1991, p. 91). Practice, like knowledge, must become problematic. The task then is for teachers to recognize what it is in schools, classrooms, and themselves that they want to change.

Fullan's work has been directed toward multi-faceted organizational change and his work is generally with groups of teachers. He proposed that educators question the potential benefit of changes they are asked to implement, rejecting those that are of questionable benefit or dubious technical quality. Fullan suggested that, through a process of questioning, a shared meaning, or consensus, would evolve that would result in substantive changes.

Fullan proposed three questions to guide deliberations about a proposed change: Who benefits? Is this innovation educationally sound? Is this innovation technically sound? An innovation that is educationally sound is founded on solid research and exemplary practice. An innovation that is technically sound is one that participants can see is "do-able," one that has either been successfully implemented elsewhere or that is clearly designed so that it can reasonably be implemented.

Sirotnik and Clark (1988) suggested a corollary to the issue of beneficiaries. They posed the "who benefits" question in another way: Who benefits from things as they are? Participants who ask this question may strengthen their knowledge of who will benefit from a proposed change and will, at the same time, identify a potential source of resistance to a change.

Rogers' model represents traditional organizational change theory. Fullan's work represents a constructivist approach to organizational change. Another element from organizational change research that offers explanation for the process of organizational change is that body of literature that focuses on factors that have been shown to facilitate or hinder change.

Factors that Facilitate or Hinder Change

No one seems to doubt that schools need to change, that they need to be better suited to adapting to changing demographics and new situations. Many people thought that the "effective schools" literature would provide a checklist of things to do (or not do) to make schools change into institutions that are equitable and excellent, fulfilling all of society's hopes for the education of its children. The literature described schools that were successful when circumstances militated against success, but it did not describe how the schools became successful or if they remained successful (Cuban, 1983). A body of literature does exist, however, that provides insight into factors that can help organizations change or that can keep them from changing.

The factors influencing change generally fall into three categories. The first category includes factors associated with the organization and its environment. The second category includes factors associated with the innovation. The third category concerns the circumstances under which the innovation is decided upon, introduced, and implemented.

Factors in the organization or its environment. Schools have resisted change with remarkable tenacity. Al Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, summarized the situation this way:

> The reason that people in other fields take risks is because there are consequences if they don't. It's not that educators are any more opposed to change and innovation than anyone else, it's just that incentives work against it. Most people do difficult things because there are rewards and punishments at the other end. Not so in schools. If we continue to fail, nothing terrible happens to us. And if we do something great and wonderful, there is no reward. (Sparks, 1991, p.3)

The dis-incentive described by Shanker is an example of how factors within an organization can hinder its ability to adapt to changing situations. Another organizational factor that can affect change is that of the traditional roles in an organization. Managers or principals accustomed to being "the boss" have enormous difficulty in growing into roles that foster innovative work environments (Clune & White, 1988; Kanter, 1983; Killion & Harrison, 1990; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Manz, Keating, & Donnellon, 1990; Moller, 1990). Likewise, employees may find it difficult to change roles (Manz, Keating, & Donnellon, 1990).

In the research that resulted in Changemasters, Rosabeth Kanter (1983) sought to identify factors in an organization's culture and structure that made innovation flourish. Supported by statistical data, she conducted qualitative studies of ten companies to see how they became innovative.

> I found that the entrepreneurial spirit producing innovation is associated with a particular way of approaching problems that I call "integrative," the willingness to move beyond received wisdom, to combine ideas from unconnected sources, to embrace change as an opportunity to test limits. (Kanter, 1983, p. 27)

The "integrative" character of the organizations Kanter studied depended on open, lateral communication between all parts of the organization, and the celebration of every employee's potential contribution. Kanter's findings were consistent with the findings of Gareth Morgan (1988) who also sought to identify factors that facilitated an organization's ability to adapt to its environment by changing when necessary. The most important factor identified by Morgan was the "cultivation of shared values, shared direction, and shared responsibility for the future of the organization" (p. 53). Another key factor was the empowerment of human resources and the creation of environments in which people expected and thrived on change. Other factors included ready access to information and the development of an appropriate culture, one that believed in itself, that encouraged risk-taking, and that provided for lateral communications without hierarchical levels.

What about organizational factors that hinder change? To a certain extent, facilitating factors can be reversed to identify stumbling blocks to change: penalize risk-takers, view employees as drones instead of valuable resources; fail to take the organization's environment into account; foster an everyone-for-oneself atmosphere; keep communication strictly within hierarchical channels; do not help people through inevitable role changes (Kanter, 1983).

Change can also be inhibited by traditional practices within a field. For example, the "power of passive resistance among teachers" (Kirst & Meister, 1985) was cited as a formidable obstacle to change. When confronted with pressure to alter practices, teachers have traditionally coped by either (a) ignoring efforts to make them change, or (b) engaging in gratuitous "facework" while making no substantive changes (Shanker, reported in Sparks, 1991).

Other researchers believe that the idea of teacher resistance is misguided (Fullan & Miles, 1992; Turnbull, 1992). These researchers cite instead the powerful forces in the teaching profession that may be stumbling blocks to change. They note the norms of isolation and non-interference typical in the profession and the tradition of bypassing teachers in the decision making process. The absence of collegiality and the absence of a sense of ownership of school problems and solutions combine to produce a climate that is not conducive to eager participation in change efforts.

Factors Associated with the Innovation. Characteristics associated with the innovation itself may serve to support or hinder change. Rogers (1983) identified some of these characteristics, which included (a) the relative advantage of the innovation to the participants, (b) compatibility of the innovation with existing beliefs, values, and experiences, (c) the complexity of the innovation (how difficult it is to learn or use), and (d) trialability (whether or not the innovation could be tested on a trial basis). The "relative advantage" factor was consistent with the findings of Fullan (1991) and with Doyle and Ponder's (1977) "practicality ethic," which described a proposed change in terms of its practical potential.

Factors Associated with Introduction & Implementation of the Innovation. The way an innovation is introduced and implemented can affect an organization's ability to change. Berman and McLaughlin (1974, 1978) identified several factors in the introduction process that facilitated successful change. Those factors included adaptive planning (adapting the innovation to the setting), appropriate and extended training, opportunities to observe a practice in action, teacher participation in relevant decisions, and the active participation of the principal. The importance of principal participation (as well as that of district administrators) was confirmed by Schmuck, Runkel, Arends, and Arends (1977).

Researchers in many disciplines have identified factors in the organization, in the innovation, and in the adoption and implementation process that can affect an organization's ability to change. In general, the results of that research may be applicable to the adoption and implementation of SDM. Another body of literature deals specifically with shared decision making, both in business and education, and I turn to that literature now.

Shared Decision Making Studies

In the review of shared decision making studies, I sought to identify facilitating or hindering factors that were specifically associated with the adoption and implementation of shared decision making, either in schools or in businesses. The experiences in business and in schools were often parallel. Apparently the vast differences between profit-seeking enterprises and schools are not enough to negate their similarities as groups of people attempting to work together in ways that make their respective endeavors most effective.

Powerful and articulate voices call for participatory decision making in business organizations because successful competition in the marketplace demands constant adaptability to changing situations. Business leaders realized that adaptability required a cooperative, participatory management philosophy (Bilik & Blum, 1989; Kanter, 1983; Morgan, 1988). Managers sought to exploit every employee's potential contribution to the organization and to do so in such a way that individuals felt integral to the organization's success.

Voices calling for SDM in schools have not been nearly so powerful as those in business. Reformers in the "first wave" of school reform, in the 1980s, called for more, not less, hierarchical control of schools (Cuban, 1988). Educators are now in a second wave of reforms and they are calling for inclusive, participatory decision making. Current "reformers" refer to evidence from the business world that supports the empowerment of an organization's human resources (Kearns, 1988).

Stumbling Blocks to Shared Decision Making

Whether in business or in schools, the implementation of SDM is not without problems. Organizations attempting implementation have encountered problems with ambiguity and uncertainty, planning and training, and difficult changes in roles and relationships.

Ambiguity and uncertainty. Harrison, Killion, and Mitchell (1989) found that school stakeholders expected to participate in decision making were unsure what, exactly, they were supposed to do, and why they were doing it. The concept of participatory decision making was foreign and the goals were unclear. A number of researchers studying shared decision making efforts identified goal ambiguity as a problem (Conley, 1989; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990; Wood & Caldwell, 1991).

District level administrators were another source of uncertainty. Participants were confused when SDM was supposedly supported by the district, but funding was inadequate (Wood & Caldwell, 1991). In some districts with SDM efforts underway, leadership from the top district administrators was nonexistent (David, 1989a). In other districts, schools were attempting to implement SDM, but mid-level managers were left out of the loop instead of being brought into facilitative roles (Dentler, Flowers, & Mulvey, 1987; White, 1989).

Perhaps the most difficult ambiguity issue revolved around role changes (Diegmueller, 1991; Harrison, Killion, & Mitchell, 1989; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Manz, Keating, & Donnellon, 1990; Moller, 1990). Most often, administrators experienced the greatest difficulty. "Many central office administrators actively blocked the practice of school-based decision making" (Harrison, Killion, & Mitchell, 1989, p. 56). Central office staff held fast to bureaucratic procedures (Dentler, Flowers, & Mulvey, 1987). Administrators found it difficult to move from authority roles and to understand the counterproductive nature of a "zero-sum" view of power, in which power shared is power lost (Conley, 1989).

Planning and training. Planners of SDM projects often were unaware of what would be required in terms of parameters. What kinds of decisions would be on the table for discussion and action? Who had veto power over decisions? With no parameters, or unclear parameters, participants were confused about how to proceed (Harrison, Killion, & Mitchell, 1989; Malen & Ogawa, 1988).

When they were only allowed to participate or provide input, participants felt manipulated and viewed SDM as a "device to gain acceptance for decisions already made by management" (Conley, 1989, p. 374). A substantial investment of time coupled with marginal authority proved to be counterproductive (Kanter, 1983; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Meier, 1987).

Planners also failed to realize and plan for the scope of skills necessary for participatory decision making. Teachers, and other workers, do not necessarily possess the skills required for participation in decision making (Diegmueller, 1991). Katzenmeyer and Reid (1991) described the necessary skills as (a) team training, to foster collegiality , and (b) capacity building, to expand the capacity to become better problem solvers. Team training involves the skills of assertive communication, team work, collaborative decision making, problem solving, conflict management, group dynamics, and task maintenance skills.

Capacity building involves listening skills, consensus skills, and problem solving models.

Another stumbling block was the failure to plan evaluations, either summative or formative (Diegmueller, 1991; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990). Project managers were unable to assess or monitor progress. Wood and Caldwell (1991) noted that, without continued monitoring, people tended to revert to old ways of working.

Time presented another problem, both in terms of the time investment required of all participants, and in terms of the length of time required to produce substantive changes (Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Moller, 1990; Wood & Caldwell, 1991). Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz ((1990) highlighted the time-related problem of diversion activities such as conducting surveys, writing plans, preparing reports, or rehearsing presentations for review team visitations.

Roles and relationships. Administrators had trouble changing from authoritative to facilitative roles. Teachers had trouble building new working relationships with the principal, with parents, and with each other.

The social norm in schools has been one of peaceful coexistence, of conflict avoidance. School people discovered that, with SDM, conflict had to be exposed and addressed. In their work with schools implementing SDM, Harrison, Killion, and Mitchell (1989, p.58) "learned to appreciate conflict as a signal that change is occurring.

We...encourage public forums for managing conflict rather than forcing people to resort to hidden agendas and dysfunctional behavior." Addressing conflict, rather than denying its existence, was a radical departure from norms of professional coexistence in schools.

Researchers studying SDM projects noted that the inability to alter relationships is often so powerful that even precautionary measures taken to guarantee participation and genuine authority for all stakeholders were undermined. In the Salt Lake City study, Malen and Ogawa (1988) encountered ingrained acceptance of hierarchical norms. Parents allowed councils to be dominated by educators. Teachers on the councils deferred to administrators. Diegmueller (1991) encountered the same problem in his study of Memphis schools.

Factors that Facilitated Shared Decision Making

Along with the identification of factors that are stumbling blocks to SDM, researchers have identified factors that help an organization implement SDM. To some extent, facilitating factors mirror stumbling blocks: When issues of ambiguity and uncertainty are clarified, when comprehensive planning and training occur, when participants understand and accept new roles and relationships, the chances for successful implementation of SDM are enhanced. Further, successful SDM requires a new kind of leadership.

Clarifying support and goals. Sickler (1988) identified several specific ways that uncertainty over district support was successfully addressed. Participants were more willing to invest in SDM when the district made a commitment to respect and support school-level decisions, when the teacher union supported the project, and when adequate funding was provided.

White (1989) found that "shared goals" provided protection against goal ambiguity. When the district, the union, and the school's stakeholders understood and agreed to goals, SDM was more successful and the overall purpose for instituting SDM (to enhance school improvement) was more likely to be achieved. "Without a shared idea as to what districts or schools aim to accomplish through SDM, it is difficult to evaluate [SDM's] effectiveness" (p. 6).

Appropriate planning and training. Not surprisingly, anticipating problems and planning to avoid them can contribute to success. Successful implementation of SDM was more likely when district level personnel were trained, won over, and put in positions of facilitating SDM in the schools (Harrison, Killion, & Mitchell, 1989). When management laid the groundwork to create risk-taking environments and support for experimentation, participants were willing to invest their time and energy in SDM and attempt innovative solutions to school problems (David, 1989b).

Experience and research in business and industry provided excellent models for training in the skills of collaboration. Building on the work of organizational change researchers, management consultants refined training in group dynamics, problem solving, conflict management, effective communication, teamwork, and consensus building. Corporations such as Xerox and Bell South have made their trainers available to schools.

Roles and relationships. Conley (1989) addressed the issues of altering traditional patterns of relationships by proposing that participants make a distinction between authority and influence, and distinctions among different domains of decision making. The nature of authority is such that it cannot be shared. Authority constrains those in non-authority positions from being able to contribute fully to the decision-making process. Also, authority is meaningless if it is not recognized as legitimate. Influence, the capacity to shape decisions through informal, non-authoritarian means, is often distributed unequally and may be multi-directional. Conley suggested that successful implementation of participatory decision making would be more likely if the capacities for influence were enhanced.

Conley also suggested that healthier new relationships would be fostered if participants agreed on domains of decision making. Management councils, or committees, do not have to deal with every decision in the organization.

Kanter (1983) identified instances in which clear lines of authority facilitated an organization's ability to function. When one person was a clearly recognized expert, or when decisions had to be made quickly, participatory decision making could be counterproductive. Barnard (1938) referred to a "zone of indifference," an area of decision making wherein directives were unquestioned because subordinates were indifferent to the issue. Witte (1980) found that workers who were asked to participate in decisions beyond their realm of interest actually experienced alienation because the issues seemed irrelevant. David's (1989a) research confirmed that participants preferred to deal with relevant issues, and further that they preferred to focus on what they considered to be significant issues.

Empowering leadership. Leaders that empowered others in the organization were able to enhance productive new relationships (David, 1989b; Smith & Purkey, 1985). Such leadership fostered collegiality (Casner-Lotto, 1988; Clune & White, 1988; Smith & Purkey, 1985) and resulted in the emergence of teacher leadership (Wood & Caldwell, 1991). Empowering leadership helped to achieve the primary goal of participatory decision making, getting better decisions by empowering more people to contribute to the decision-making process.

Foster (1986) developed a model of critical leadership consistent with the type of leadership required in a SDM school. Foster's model has this essential element: "leadership" resides in acts, not in job descriptions. All members of the community may at times be leaders, at times be followers. An act of leadership emerges from the context, perhaps centering on a particular issue, and is essentially an act of influence among collaborators, an act which enables rational participation in the life of the school.

Summary of Shared Decision Making Studies

For all that is known about factors that facilitate progress toward participatory decision making, school people have been generally unable to overcome the stumbling blocks and successfully implement SDM. In a review of SDM studies, Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz (1990) concluded that SDM was an unfulfilled promise. Site participants rarely exerted influence on (or even addressed) policy decisions. Instead, councils listened, advised, and rubber-stamped decisions while focusing on such things as procedures, fund raising, and schedules. Principals protected prerogatives. Teachers rarely challenged principals. Parents rarely challenged teachers or principals. The educators continued to control agendas, meeting formats, and the flow of information. Instructional changes did not occur. No studies revealed evidence of improved student achievement.

Do the conclusions of Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz lead to a view of participatory decision making at the school level as a misguided strategy for restructuring schools? Certainly, their conclusions do not project a positive view of SDM. In response, Smith and Purkey (1985) wrote that difficulties in implementing SDM cannot be allowed to stall a process which has proven very successful in other arenas of human endeavor, a process that is consistent with democratic ideals, and which continues to hold promise for transforming schools.

Literature Review Summary

In the review of organizational theory, four variables emerged as particularly relevant to an organization's ability to change: organizational context, structure, characteristics, and culture. Those variables provide the framework for relating the Neptune case study in Chapter IV.

The review of organizational change theory centered on representative work from two organizational change theorists. Rogers' (1983) organizational change model represented traditional change theory research. Fullan's (1991) "shared meaning" work, represented a constructivist approach to organizational change.

Factors that help or hinder change were identified in two ways: variables relevant to organizational change in general and variables identified in shared decision making studies specifically. The Neptune High School data were analyzed to see which variables identified in the literature were confirmed by the Neptune experience.

In the case study, I describe the process of adopting and implementing SDM at Neptune, using as a framework the issues and variables reviewed in literature from organizational theory and organizational change theory. The Neptune experience is then presented chronologically using the terms and descriptors of Rogers' model.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Case Study

Qualitative case study methodology is integral to fulfilling the purpose of this study. It is the methodology Rogers (1983) and other change theorists said was needed in order to better understand the change process. The research goal of this study was to explore the predictive and explanatory power of organizational change theories in describing the adoption and implementation of a particular instance of shared decision making (SDM), a participant-constructed innovation. This goal required a design that was longitudinal, provided a structure for documenting and describing events from the participants' point of view, and made use of first-hand data collected in person and on-site. Case study methodology is "an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena" (Merriam, 1988, p.2) and an ideal design for fulfilling the goals of this study. A qualitative case study is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1988, p.16). Case studies are descriptive, focus on a specific situation, and provide interpretation of that situation. The qualitative case study methodology provided the structure needed to understand the adoption and implementation of SDM at Neptune.

The School

I studied Neptune High School, a suburban high school in a Florida county I will call Seabreeze. Neptune is a school with 1700 students, 99 faculty, five administrators, and 49 non-instructional staff. It is a research and development magnet school with a reputation for high academic achievement. The racial mix of the students body is 70% white, 25% black, and 5% other races, numbers that generally reflect the racial mix of the district.

The SDM Project

Seabreeze County's Shared Decision Making (SDM) project resulted from negotiations between the union and the school board and was designed to involve stakeholders at the school level in decisions about education at each school. The goal, as stated in literature published by the district, was to improve student achievement through innovative programs created by people who knew each group of students best, the teachers, parents, administrators, staff members, and students at each school.

Although literature published by the district mentioned goals of the project, the stakeholders at each school were given little direct information about the goals, meaning or parameters of SDM. Training, provided by Bell South through the district's Human Resources Department, focused on visions and possibilities for SDM, process skills (team building and consensus strategies), and other specific logistical information (Moller, 1990). Participants were told that SDM would not include budget or hiring decisions, but topics to be addressed through SDM were otherwise undesignated.

Neptune was one of ten pilot schools selected to participate in the district's SDM project. Participation required a majority vote of the faculty, support of the principal, approval of a district selection panel, and willingness to cooperate in a formative evaluation by University of Florida researchers. Of the ten pilot schools in the project, six (including Neptune) were part of the formative evaluation. The selection of Neptune for this study of organizational change was, to a certain extent, the luck of the draw. Two researchers were assigned to each of the large high schools in the study. Because my research partner had extensive experience in high school teaching and administration, and I had long been involved with a magnet school that had a research and development mission, we were assigned to Neptune High School.

Getting In

Even though participation in a formative evaluation was a requirement for SDM participation, school personnel were not required to be enthusiastic about the evaluation.

Willing cooperation was achieved through a combination of factors that included a trusted and capable liaison person at the school, school personnel who were interested in both the project and the research, and efforts by the researchers to maintain the confidence of the participants.

The school liaison was a key factor in the ability of the researchers to gather data. The person chosen to serve as liaison was in a position to have flexible time and was viewed by participants as trustworthy. Before each site visit, the liaison set up interview schedules for each researcher that allowed for at least one interview each period of the school day for two days. The liaison also arranged for places to conduct the interviews.

On our first site visit, my research partner and I were greeted with decidedly mixed reactions. Presented to the faculty at an early morning faculty meeting, we spoke to the group and briefly described our role in the project. We described the work we planned to do, how we hoped it would be helpful to them, how their anonymity would be assured, and how their cooperation and experience would help others. (See Appendix A, Project Information for Participants). We received a fairly cold reception from the group and knew immediately that gaining entry into their working lives could prove to be a challenge. Almost no one smiled. Few questions were asked. We were told later that teachers resented the early morning faculty meeting. We were also told that most of the faculty had seen a procession of researchers over the years, but had not seen much benefit to the school from those researchers. Interestingly, even the people who expressed skepticism about SDM and negative opinions of researchers were pleasant to us and willing to be interviewed. Almost all agreed to have the interviews recorded.

Data Collection

A variety of data were collected for this study. Data included the three types described by Merriam (1988): interview, documentary, and observation. Baseline statistical data were provided by the district and included demographic analysis, attendance and dropout figures, comparative grade averages among schools in the district, and achievement test scores. A school climate questionnaire designed and analyzed by the university research team provided baseline data on issues drawn from the effective schools literature. Six site visits provided the opportunity for us to conduct 145 interviews in person. Another twenty interviews were conducted by telephone. The interviews were structured around scripts developed by the entire team of seven researchers (four faculty and three graduate students). The same interview script was used by all researchers so similar data would be collected at all schools. Each researcher attempted to follow productive leads so that the interview process was flexible enough to explore the situations unique to each school. (See Appendix C, Interview Scripts). My own strategy was to follow the script closely as long as it did not prevent subjects from expanding on responses.

During the interviews, researchers were attempting to gather data that would provide a portrait of the school community, document events related to SDM, track evolving definitions and impressions of SDM, and identify problems that might be stumbling blocks to the implementation of SDM. The interviews ranged in length from twenty to sixty minutes, but were typically about forty-five minutes long. In addition to the baseline statistical and survey data, and the interviews conducted in person and by telephone, data also included printed minutes of meetings, videotapes of meetings, and documents produced by the SDM Council and committees. The school liaison person was very conscientious about helping to gather information and make it available to us. Over the three years of the project, we came to feel very much at home at Neptune. A number of key people were interviewed several times, so we came to know a lot about the working lives and even the private lives of the participants.

All of the data collected by my research partner and I constituted one shared body of data. We each drew from the same data to write our reports to the school and to write our dissertations. We read and analyzed each others' interviews, viewed and analyzed videotapes together, and spent many hours discussing our findings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in a qualitative case study occurs in two phases (Merriam, 1988). Initial analysis is simultaneous with, and provides direction for, data collection. The integration of analysis throughout the research process is a hallmark of qualitative research (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). The questions for our first round of on-site interviews were based on our general knowledge of schools, insight gained from a review of school restructuring literature, and the nature of the formative evaluation we were contracted to provide. After the visit, I transcribed interviews, compiled and analyzed responses, and, together with my partner, wrote a status report for the school. Status reports provided participants with feedback from our visit. In the reports, we shared and interpreted information we had collected. The questions for each subsequent round of interviews reflected trends and information gained in the previous interviews. Before each visit, the entire research team met to decide what questions would be included in the next interviews. On-going analysis of data also influenced the selection of particular subjects to be interviewed and particular documents to obtain.

The second phase of data analysis was undertaken after data collection was completed and the case record was compiled. A case record includes all forms of data, organized chronologically or topically into a "comprehensive resource package" (Patton, 1980, p.313). Analysis of the data involves re-reading everything and searching for patterns in the data and for a preponderance of data that can support reasonable conclusions and generalizations (Spradley, 1980; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

Preliminary work with the interview data resulted in categories that served to document the implementation process, reveal the explanatory power of existing organizational change theory, and explore the role of Fullan's shared meaning ideas. (See Appendix D) Categories for analysis also emerged from the questions we asked, from the data, and from issues raised in the review of literature. Most categories for analysis were created by questions constructed to fulfill the purpose of the formative evaluation, which was to document and interpret the implementation process. Responses to those questions provided a framework for documenting events, exploring micropolitical issues, tracing the evolution of the participants' definitions of SDM, gauging individual responses to the implementation process.

Organizational change theory literature provided additional categories for analysis. The structure, history, and purpose of an organization, the characteristics of the innovation, and the way in which change is presented and pursued within an organization have been shown to influence an organization's ability to change. Searching the data for evidence of these factors revealed information that explained Neptune's implementation experience within the framework of change theory. Finally, responses to questions suggested by Fullan (1991) were compiled for analysis. Those questions focused on participants' perceptions of who would benefit from SDM and whether or not SDM was educationally and technically sound.

Analysis of videotaped council meetings provided unique insight into the interactions of the group. From the recordings, it was possible to see who spoke, who did not, the degree of deference to the principal, the degree to which the principal assumed a leadership role, the quality of leadership provided by the chairperson, the camaraderie of the group, and the way students participated and were treated. Minutes of SDM council meetings provided documentation to support, explain, or even refute data gathered in interviews. The minutes themselves, especially the "additions or corrections," revealed that the printed and distributed records of the meetings were scrutinized for accuracy by the various stakeholders. Other documents, including memos from the chairperson of the council, drafts of proposals from the subcommittees, and waiver applications, were examined and provided insight into the actual workings of the group.

During the first reading of the compiled case record, I created an initial list of categories for analysis and a preliminary outline for the case study. During the next reading, I marked off sections for coding. In the margin of each section, I wrote a code that identified the researcher, the year, the protocol number, and the page. For example, the code "LL 2/3/5" indicated that the data was collected by Linda Ledbetter during the second year of the study and could be found on page three of protocol number two. Along with the code, I noted the category for analysis. I then cut the sections and sorted them by category.

When the data were arranged chronologically by category, I could see patterns in the data, trace the evolution of events, and identify appropriate quotes. Working with one category at a time, I began to compile the case study.

Reliability

Qualitative researchers attend to the issue of external reliability by recognizing and addressing several issues: the role of the researcher, the methods used for collecting and analyzing data, and the choices of informants (LeCompte & Goetz, 1984). In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument. Because the relationship with informants will be unique to each researcher, it is essential that the researcher's status within the group, as well as prior knowledge of the group or phenomena, be clearly identified to readers.

When we were first introduced to the faculty, my partner and I were instantly labelled "university researchers." We moved quickly to redefine ourselves. Just as the approach one takes when administering a research instrument can affect the outcome of a quantitative study, so the relationship between researcher and informant can affect the outcome of a qualitative study. Having been warned that faculty at Neptune had a fairly low regard for researchers, my partner and I chose to emphasize our status as experienced educators who were presently students. We felt that openness and trust would be compromised by the "researcher" label and would be enhanced by the view of us as fellow teachers. We never abandoned our role as researchers. We did not become collaborators or colleagues. We did not respond with opinions or evaluative remarks during our interviews. When we were introduced to the faculty, and later during informal conversations, we simply let it be known that we were educators with extensive experience in schools.

Another external reliability issue is that of informant choices. A subsidiary issue is that of the interview settings, because informants may give different responses in different settings. The people interviewed at Neptune were sometimes volunteers and sometimes specifically sought out, well as people representing an ethnic and gender mix. The liaison was invaluable in identifying those people and arranging the interviews. Interviews were conducted in a variety of settings that included classrooms (with and without students), the library's periodical room, conference rooms, office carrels, lounges, picnic tables, offices, the media workroom, the A-V storage room, and the in-school suspension room. Privacy was assured in almost every setting. If the setting was not private, we sought assurance from the respondent that the lack of privacy did not compromise the authenticity of the responses. In every instance, participants were asked to sign a consent form and agree to have the interview recorded. (See Appendix B, Consent Form). Almost everyone agreed to being recorded, but if anyone objected, we recorded answers by hand.

Internal reliability, the probability of multiple researchers within a single study (especially a multi-site study) finding the same factors, is addressed in qualitative research with one general control and several facilitating controls. In general, researchers at each site must hold congruent sets of meanings (or definitions) so that they look for the same things and describe phenomena in the same way. In the SDM project, the entire team met to review research goals and write the questions that were asked at all of the schools in the project. Team members followed the interview scripts and compiled status reports that addressed the same issues in each school. The amount of time the team spent together created a unique situation throughout the SDM project. Approximately 50 hours were spent in transit to and from the school, much of that time discussing the study.

Other common strategies to reduce threats to internal reliability include the use of low inference descriptors (concrete, precise), multiple researchers, member checks (taking findings back to the participants for confirmation), peer examination of emerging findings, and mechanically recorded data. All of these strategies have been employed for this study: direct quotes are used extensively, two researchers compared data continuously, informants received status reports, and almost all interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Validity

Internal validity in qualitative research is addressed by doing work in the field (on-site), interviewing and observing over time, analyzing responses and searching for patterns, and writing in explicit detail. Internal validity in qualitative research means "getting it right," accurately portraying the situation as it is experienced by the participants.

To address the issues of history and maturation, the qualitative researcher may use replication and time sampling strategies to distinguish maturation from other intervening phenomena in order to identify their possible causes, interactions, and impact. For example, throughout the study some questions were asked at each visit. Participants were asked to define SDM, to explain their perceptions of the goals of SDM, and to describe stumbling blocks that existed. At the same time, other questions explored unfolding and evolving events.

Threats to internal validity can come from personal involvement with respondents as well as from perceived distance from respondents. Participants may be evasive, dishonest, or misinformed. To guard against these effects, the researcher attempts to avoid ethnocentrism and bias, searching for the participants' perspective. Member checks at Neptune took the form of status reports, which were sent to the school after each visit. In the reports, we interpreted data collected during the site visit. The reports gave stakeholders at the school a broad view of events and alerted them to emerging stumbling blocks. The reports also provided an opportunity for school personnel to evaluate the validity of our findings.

Another threat to internal validity is that of selection, and it is addressed by selecting a diverse group of informants. In this study, the school liaison worked to provide us with a wide range of informants. The person chosen to be the liaison was recognized by people at the school as reliable and trustworthy, a person who had been at the school for a long time, and was not associated with any particular factions.

Internal validity can also be threatened by spurious conclusions which require the elimination of rival explanations. A longitudinal study and an ongoing search for sources of bias can overcome the problem of spurious conclusions. The Neptune study was longitudinal and involved the collaboration of fellow researchers to facilitate the ongoing search for sources of bias. Every status report resulted from the collaboration of at least three researchers (my research partner and I plus the head of the research team), each of whom had a personal stake in the accuracy of the reports.

External validity in qualitative research focuses on comparability and translatability rather than generalization based on random samples of a population. Comparability is achieved when the characteristics of the group studied or the constructs generated are so clearly delineated that the reader can have a basis for comparison with other groups. Translatability is achieved when the "research methods, analytic categories, and characteristics of the phenomena and groups are identified so explicitly that comparison can be conducted confidently" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p.34). The external validity issues were addressed in my study by the use of multiple methods of collecting data, multiple researchers, and multiple sites. The explicit details that contribute to comparability and translatability were incorporated into the case study.

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues are particularly complex in qualitative research, and they emerge at every stage of the study. Throughout the collection and analysis of data and in the dissemination of the findings, the researcher must take care to assure that confidentiality is respected and analysis is not twisted by researcher bias. The published results must harm no one. Ethics in this instance is much more than a moral issue: a breach of ethics would have brought the research to a halt. Betrayal of trust, the perception that respondents were being used as fodder for dissertations or publications, or inaccurate status reports would have resulted in participants' unwillingness to continue with the study. My research partner and I were discreet in our interactions with respondents and as accurate as possible in our reports. We tried to make our reports useful to the stakeholders so that they were beneficiaries of our work instead of simply sources of data.

The methodology described here is consistent with the goal of the proposed research and provides the framework for a study that adds to a theory of organizational change and specifically informs a theory of change for constructed innovations such as shared decision making.

CHAPTER IV
SHARED DECISION MAKING AT NEPTUNE HIGH SCHOOL: THE PROMISE AND PITFALLS OF DEMOCRACY

In this chapter, I relate the experience of Neptune High School and the change process through which the Neptune stakeholders travelled as they initiated and implemented shared decision making (SDM). I describe the school, the community, and the school district in order to place the change process in a particular context. The description is followed by a chronology of the initiation and implementation of SDM at Neptune.

The framework for the first section, "A Context for Change," is provided by the organizational theory literature. In that literature, researchers identified characteristics that affect an organization's ability to change. Those characteristics provide the section subheadings. The framework for the second and third sections of this chapter, "Initiation" and "Implementation," come directly from Rogers'(1983) organizational change model.

A Context for Change

The change process at Neptune was affected by many contextual factors. Among those factors were school and community characteristics, the physical facilities, the attitudes and talents of the school's stakeholders, the organizational context within which the school functioned, the school's history and purpose, and the school's pre-existing structure, culture, and micropolitics.

School and Community Characteristics

Neptune is a large school characterized by friendly informality. Students dress casually, lounge on the grass, and greet peers and teachers in a congenial manner. The school is located in a county I will call Seabreeze.

Seabreeze County is a place where homelessness and poverty exist at the doorstep of conspicuous wealth. Of the 247,000 children under the age of 18 in the county, 35,565 (14%) live below the poverty level (Florida Center for Children and Youth, 1990). Thirteen percent of the students in the county attend private schools (Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1992).

As in most communities, housing patterns contribute to de facto segregation by race and social class. The wealthy residents generally live along the ocean front or intracoastal waterways while the poor residents live along a corridor that follows a main highway through the county. The school district uses busing and magnet schools to achieve racial integration . For Neptune High, a magnet school that draws students from throughout the district, integration is addressed through selection policies that admit approximately 79% white and 21% minority students, slightly different from the 70% white and 30% minority figures revealed in a demographic profile of the county.

Although the district has attempted to insure the integration of Neptune, classes in the school reveal a pattern of segregation. As one teacher explained, "Just stick your head in the classrooms and you'll soon see that the AP [advanced placement] classes are all white and the low-level classes are filled with black students."

The school's 1991 progress report to parents noted that African American students make up 21% of the student population. Those students received 30% of the out-of-school suspensions and 35% of the in-school suspensions during the 1990-91 school year.

Neptune's reputation is built on a college preparatory program one parent described as "tough." From the graduating class of 1993, 92% of the students were going on to some kind of post-secondary schooling. The school prides itself on sending many of its students to selective colleges. The walls of the counseling department are filled with pamphlets from colleges that offer the promise of secure middle- and upper-class futures for Neptune's high achievers. Each year, the counseling department publishes a list of the colleges to which Neptune graduates will be going and the list always includes the names of famous, elite colleges.

The school district faces enormous challenges certain to affect the ability of the district or the schools to function and change. The district's unique challenge is a student population that is presently growing by an average of thirty-five students a day. Many of the new students do not speak English. Explosive and ethnically diverse growth presents logistical and educational challenges that require enormous resources. County taxpayers passed a multi-million dollar bond issue in 1988 that provided funds for new construction and renovations to meet the demands of relentless growth, but by 1993, it was evident that the district was millions short of enough money to meet building needs.

Facilities

At Neptune, the effects of growth, ethnic diversity, and construction are evident everywhere. Thirty portable classrooms surround the school, providing space for extra classrooms and for classes displaced by construction. During the study, stakeholders were functioning with one wing of the school under construction, another wing under renovation, and the media center relocated to makeshift quarters to allow for asbestos removal.

The people we interviewed for this study said that the size and layout of the Neptune campus was a major problem. Neptune has 1700 students, 99 faculty, five administrators, and a non-instructional staff (secretaries, custodians, and food service workers) of 54. The school consists of several one-story stucco buildings, each of which houses a curriculum area or administrative offices. Many people at Neptune said that the layout of the school makes interdepartmental communication and cooperation difficult. "This is a fragmented school...more like a college, with the English department someplace and the math department someplace else," said one teacher. Another teacher noted "There's no big faculty lounge and we don't get together and talk about [one another's] program."

During our first site visit, in February, 1990, the Neptune campus appeared bleak. Buildings needed painting and the grounds were ill-kept. A year later, well-planned and carefully tended landscaping as well as newly painted buildings gave the school a decidedly better appearance. When asked what prompted the changes, teachers and staff members said the prinicpal was largely responsible for the improvements. One teacher said, "This school looks the best it has in years. [The principal] has cleaned this place up." His apparent role was to adjust resource allocations to achieve an improved appearance for the school.

The Neptune Stakeholders

Members of the Neptune school community offered remarkably consistent opinions about the faculty, principal, parents, and students. They described the faculty as "strong," the principal as "fair" and competent, the parents as active and powerful, and the students as "the best anywhere."

Faculty. Teachers at Neptune have chosen to work at a school with a reputation for innovation and academic excellence. Most stay a long time. One staff member explained that teachers "came to this school because they wanted to be part of the newness and experimentation." A teacher told us, "We've never lost the zeal for trying new things." About half of the faculty has worked together for 15-20 years.

Parents, students, administrators, staff, and teachers described the faculty as "dynamic," "innovative," "intelligent," "risk-takers," "mature," "excellent teachers," and anxious to try something new and different. Teachers spoke confidently of their teaching ability.

Principal. During 1989-90, the year Neptune stakeholders voted to be a SDM pilot school, the principal was a first-year principal in a school where teachers stay a long time and principals traditionally have short tenure. One teacher reported that the new principal arrived "with some fairly autocratic notions," and several teachers said that he initially behaved in ways that put people off. As the principal became an active SDM supporter, teachers' opinions changed. They began to describe him as fair, competent, and determined to make SDM work at Neptune. Stakeholders said of him: "He's part of the team." "I trust him." "He communicates well."

The principal supported SDM and said shared management was consistent with his personality and leadership style. He believed SDM would allow stakeholders to see beyond self-interest, to consider the interests of the school, and to better understand the constraints under which others worked. When faculty votes went against his preferences, when parents complained about policies instituted through SDM, when the process was slow and cumbersome, the principal's commitment to shared decision making did not waver.

Parents. Neptune teachers described parents as active, involved, supportive, and influential. Parents put their children on the school's waiting list early, often when the children are born. Once their children are enrolled, parents must contend with inconvenient schedules and long commutes to school. In return, parents expect that their children will receive an excellent education. Most have high expectations, monitor their children's progress, and are involved in school activities. One staff member explained, "At this school, parents really carry the weight." Said another, "Until our present principal came, I think the parents dictated [policy]. The parents and kids ran the school."

Parent influence was a factor in the first big issue addressed through SDM, a new attendance policy. Although the school's 89% attendance rate compared well to the rates at other schools in the county, teachers believed the attendance rate was too low and that excessive absences weakened the educational program. Teachers told us that seniors routinely took off every Friday. Further, the complicity of parents in the attendance problem was a thorn in the side of faculty and staff. Parents, who teachers say "think of this as their own private school," allowed their children to skip school at will. "The parents are too willing to call in an excuse for the kids. They'll lie for [their child]," said a teacher.

Students. When asked about the strengths of Neptune, most stakeholders replied "the students." As one teacher explained, "We have a high calibre of students. Most of our kids are college-bound." Students at Neptune receive awards and recognition in an impressive array of endeavors. Scholarships, acceptance to competitive colleges, and awards for academic achievement indicate a substantial number of Neptune students are high achievers.

Students' cars, many of them quite expensive, fill a 380-space parking lot. During the lunch hour, students often leave in their cars to buy lunch off campus. Those without cars but with enough money to buy lunch walk to one of several fast-food eateries in the neighborhood. Those with neither cars nor money are left to eat on campus. Twenty-nine percent of the student population is on the free or reduced lunch program, and most of these students are African American or Hispanic.

Although people often characterize Neptune students as high achievers, teachers frequently referred to another group they called "comp" [compensatory] and "low-level" students. "We have students who are reading at a 4th or 5th grade level," one teacher told us. "They can't even fill out a college application." Asked if some students fall between the cracks at Neptune, another teacher said "Yeah, lots of them." The students who struggle academically present quite a contrast to the 280 students who met the eligibility requirement for a proposed MENSA chapter on campus.

The students who are not high achievers were described by one administrator as the school's "orphans." The orphans play a role in a caste-like system at Neptune. One long-time teacher said that teachers with clout are assigned choice rooms, convenient schedules, and "never teach even regular, much less low-level, students."

Organizational Context: the District

Organizationally, the Seabreeze school system is a typical district. Six elected school board members set district policy and hire a superintendent to manage day-to-day operations of the system. Assistant superintendents oversee particular functions, and three area superintendents each supervise sub-districts within the system. Policies and goals of the Board work their way down from the superintendent, through middle-management, on to school principals, and finally to the teachers, staff, parents, and students.

The effects of the bureaucratic hierarchy have been mitigated by thirteen years of school-based management in the district. Policies and goals are still determined by the Board, but principals have some discretion in determining how to meet those goals. For example, principals are given considerable control over resource allocation and staff selection while being expected to implement the Board's goals concerning such things as student achievement, graduation rates, and attendance.

Neptune was created as a research and development school by the Seabreeze school district in 1962, but its relationship with the district has changed over the years and its changing status is a source of ongoing concern at the school. In its early years, Neptune was funded through foundation grants and as a result was given a good deal of autonomy by the district. As outside funding disappeared, Neptune had to function with the same financial constraints as other schools and the school's autonomy diminished accordingly. Asked if any particular event precipitated dramatic changes at Neptune, one teacher said, "Yes, when the district took over, when we had to listen to them and comply with their rules, it totally changed the school." Recalling the early years, one teacher said Neptune "was a different type of school. We had open classrooms, we had individual study, we did not have tests." The student population at Neptune has also changed in recent years. One teacher told us, "I've watched it go from being [a mostly white school] funded by Ford Foundation grants with all the money in the world, down to an integrated school, with all classes of students."

Neptune High school and the Seabreeze school district maintain an uneasy alliance. Stakeholders from every constituency (parents, administrators, teachers, students, staff) told us the threat of being turned into a "regular" school was always present. Perhaps because of the history of independence, the Neptune stakeholders seem particularly sensitive to the restrictions of the district bureaucracy.

Neptune's History and Purpose

Neptune is a school with a sense of purpose: It is a research and development (R&D) magnet school. Since its beginning, Neptune has been a place where teachers tried new things. Teachers, administrators, and staff members who have been at the school for a long time remember being on the cutting edge of educational innovations. They recall such things as open classrooms, creative evaluation methods, and block scheduling. In recent years, the school has become more like other schools in the district. As one teacher said, "We've lost the innovative spirit. Really, we're not that different from most high schools."

Uncertainty about the school's present and future status is a persistent worry at Neptune. One administrator said, "There is always talk about turning this into a neighborhood school, and a lot of people don't want that to happen." Some teachers and administrators cited fear of being a "regular" school as a reason for joining the SDM project. "We're supposed to be an innovative school and we're supposed to try out [new ideas]. That is part of our role in the system," one teacher said. Another said, "There are times when we do things [that are innovative] to maintain our existence." Many people saw shared decision making as an opportunity to regain the school's innovative spirit and revive its R&D tradition.

Neptune joined the Coalition of Essential Schools in 1988. Coalition schools build programs around principles articulated by Theodore Sizer, a professor of education at Brown University. The schools in the coalition have five years to build their programs before they actually become part of the network, and then only after an evaluation by Coalition personnel indicates that the principles have been implemented at the school. Because the Coalition of Essential Schools is itself a participant-constructed innovation, schools in the network do not receive a blueprint for change (Prestine, 1992). Schools receive training in Coalition principles and grants to support new programs. Neptune used its funds to develop a pilot project, a Coalition school within Neptune that involved about 300 students. Teachers who participated in the pilot project recalled the integrated studies and block scheduling as examples of innovative education, but the Coalition principles have not extended to the rest of the school.

Pre-existing Structure

A network of management and instructional structures exists in all schools, including Neptune. The management structure defines how things are accomplished and decisions are made. Instructional structures define how students are taught.

The organizational structure of Neptune is similar to that in most American high schools. The principal is appointed by the district and is responsible for all aspects of the school's operation. Four deans oversee specific functions (student affairs, attendance, curriculum, discipline). Department heads, elected by their peers, attend to departmental details. Before SDM, department heads and the principal made up a group that functioned much like an executive board for the school.

To determine the pre-SDM managerial structure at Neptune, we asked respondents how they would go about making a change at the school. Consistently, teachers said "I'd go to the principal" or "I'd go to my department head." Department chairpersons, and others with clout, went straight to the principal to negotiate change. Other people went through departmental channels. Of course, the principal could, and still does, make changes that he believes are appropriate or that are mandated by the district hierarchy. Asked if there was a history of SDM at Neptune, a long-time staff member said many items have been negotiable in the past, but "not everything. Budget has always been held back. That has never been on the table." Personnel decisions are also made with little, if any, stakeholder input.

The instructional structure of Neptune is, like the organizational structure, similar to high schools everywhere. Students are tracked into compensatory, regular, honors, or advanced placement (AP) classes. The school curriculum is largely determined by state mandates, but teachers try new things and expand course offerings. When the SDM project began, students were attending seven classes every day. Midway through the study, the principal instituted a "rotator" schedule that cut the number of classes each day to six and extended the length of five of those classes.

School Culture

At Neptune, people are accustomed to trying new things. A teacher said, "we are always changing, always. There is nothing we haven't done at least once. And if something bombs, no problem. You still learn from it. No one says it was a dumb idea."

The teachers and administrators at Neptune seem to confuse the habit of "trying new things" with the mandate for "research and development." We found no evidence of research except in references to researchers who had come to the school to conduct studies. No one spoke of researchable questions, intentional research designs, evaluation, results, or publication of research findings. People at Neptune develop ideas and share the results with other schools and other districts, but they do not appear to conduct research.

High performance by both teachers and students, a habit of trying new things, and a business-like atmosphere pervade the culture of Neptune. Much like the excellent companies described by Peters and Waterman (1982), Neptune has a well-defined culture: It is a "can-do" school. The sense of individual and corporate self-confidence is almost palpable, so when Neptune stakeholders tackled SDM, they did so with confidence.

"We're just good," said one teacher. An administrator said of the faculty, "In my opinion, the best teachers in the county are concentrated here." When asked to explain why, he said "Expectations, expectations. Teachers here are expected to perform." In this context, "perform" means preparing students for acceptance to top colleges.

The same administrator who commented on the high quality of teachers was careful to point out, however, that high academic expectations were primarily for the high-achieving students. He added:

> I don't see how people can build a big ego thing over doing a good job only with highly motivated, academically capable students. It's not unusual to send kids with Ivy League potential to Ivy League schools. What you get coming in is what you get going out.

We asked what happened to the regular or low-level students and a teacher answered that "regular kids are at an advantage here because of the general sense of high expectations, but the low-level kids are no better off than [they would be] at any other high school."

The ambience at Neptune was not family-like. One teacher said, "It is not a warm school, let me put it to you like that. If anybody croaks in the hallway here, [teachers] will step over him and wonder who will get his job. An esprit de corps is lacking." Faculty and student relationships are warm, but teacher-to-teacher relationships are cooler. "I just feel the faculty is segmented. There is no cohesiveness," said one teacher. "I don't think opinions are harbored quietly by anyone," said one teacher.

Micropolitics

Some stakeholders cited the physical isolation of departments as one reason for faculty disharmony. Others cited a deeply entrenched micropolitical system. The teacher who said "teachers have always run this school" was not referring to a collaborative arrangement in which all teachers participated equally. The reference was to the traditional power arrangements at the school. The following three quotes from teachers describe the relative power of the principal and faculty prior to SDM:

> There is a tradition [of teacher control] and you generally have to break the principal in to that tradition. So the first couple of years of a new principal is kind of rocky until they get the drift of things.
>
> We have never kowtowed or been afraid of the principal. We respect them...and we also tell them we will exist with or without you. This school and the teachers in this school have a unique drive to run themselves.
>
> There isn't any [principal] who wants this school. And that's because [we're] a very strong faculty. Some teachers have been here for twenty-five, twenty-six years, since they opened the doors. It takes a certain talent to lead this group. And this faculty has a history of running the school.

The following quotes describe the relative power of certain teachers:

> Invariably there are strong voices. It's been felt throughout the years...there have been a few people who have the principal's ear.
>
> You have people in certain places that have years of experience...who are ears to other people. They're like the power behind the throne.
>
> [The powerbrokers] are the people who have been here for years and know the administrators well. It's consistently the same people who get the better rooms, the fewest students, seventh period off for planning.
>
> There are teachers on this faculty who should be given chances to teach other than basic skills courses. But [the message is] you've only been here four years, honey, so you have to wait for twenty, or whatever.

> I tried to institute a scheduling arrangement I thought would be better for students, but some of the old-time teachers got to the principal [and killed the idea]. But that's the kind of battle that goes on here constantly.

Soon after Neptune joined the SDM project, some teachers hoped that democratic, collaborative decision making might change the school's power structure. One teacher explained:

> I think there is a power group at this school. I think they're going to have to give up a little of that power...and let some of us participate. There are people who have so much influence because they've been here since the beginning. I think some of those people are going to have to let some newcomers have some say so.

Summary

Some of the factors present in Neptune's situation provided a certain readiness for SDM: a history of teacher and parent input, capable staff in the district Human Resources Department, excellent teachers, a principal committed to SDM, a risk-taking culture, a history of trying new things, and a compelling wish to maintain status as a research and development school.

Other factors militated against change. The school was imbedded in an hierarchical bureaucracy; the teachers typically worked in physical and professional isolation from teachers in other departments; parents often used power tactics to gain advantages for their own children; and an elite group on the faculty was accustomed to privileges and power. The pre-SDM Neptune High school was a classic example of Weick's (1976) "loose coupling." That is, while stakeholders had a common bond, the welfare of students, the elements often worked at odds with each other.

All of the factors described here (school and community characteristics, physical facilities, stakeholders, organizational context, the school's history and purpose, and the pre-existing structure, culture, and micropolitics) provided a particular context for change. Some of the factors are unique to Neptune, while others are typical of many other high schools. I have tried to make explicit the contextual factors in order to better explain how the Neptune stakeholders approached and proceeded with SDM.

Initiation of the Shared Decision Making Project

The initiation phase of the SDM project included events that culminated in the adoption of SDM by the Neptune stakeholders. During the initiation phase, the district adopted SDM, a core group of school SDM leaders was formed and received some training, and the faculty received the core group's proposal to become a SDM school. With little deliberation, the faculty voted to adopt SDM.

SDM Adoption at the District Level

Before it was initiated in Seabreeze County, SDM was a much-publicized innovation in Dade County, Florida. Long-term effects of SDM had not been documented at the schools in either Dade County or elsewhere prior to the decision to adopt SDM in Seabreeze County. A pamphlet prepared by the district and the union did refer to the benefits of collaborative decision making suggested by experience in business and industry.

The SDM pilot project resulted from negotiations between the district and the teachers' union, a union that has actively supported SDM-type initiatives throughout the United States. The agreement provided for two full-time facilitators, one a school administrator and the other a teacher. Bell South provided funds for training and the district provided funds for a formative evaluation by University of Florida researchers. At least two additional district people devoted part of their time to the project and a staff person coordinated the training.

Neptune stakeholders were uncertain why the district agreed to the SDM project. Some stakeholders ascribed noble intent to the district while other expressed cynicism. When stakeholders at Neptune were asked "Why do you think the district supports shared decision making?" they replied:

> I think they would endorse a program like this because it is sort of liberal, innovative...I don't want to say avant garde, but something new to education. [This current school board has] been very progressive.
>
> It [SDM] came about because of [a particular school board member]. He believed that education for kids could be improved with SDM.
>
> It's another ploy to get free hours from employees.
>
> It's an attempt to keep everyone happy.

> I think the district saw that if they didn't do it, they weren't ever going to get a signed contract from this union in the fall. That was the last thing to be negotiated and the union wouldn't budge, so they had to go along with everything.
>
> Because they can blame somebody other than themselves [if students don't perform well].
>
> I don't know. I know we have someone who's fairly new at the head of our system. Maybe they're looking for new ideas. I'm not sure why they're doing this.
>
> My gut feeling is that if the district supports anything, they're getting money for it, to be honest with you. It's good PR. I know I sound very cynical. I think that basically the district would like to see positive things going on in education, but nobody moves to do anything unless they're getting something in return for it.
>
> Primarily, [they support SDM] for political reasons. It looks good on their record. And secondarily, because they think it will help in the schools.

Stakeholders' responses indicate that a certain lack of faith in district support existed from the beginning of the project. Although they were proceeding with the project, stakeholders were apparently doing so with some reservations. They also expressed uncertainty about why the union supported SDM. When we asked "Why do you think the union is supporting SDM?" stakeholders told us:

> I think it's a good political move. They can then say "Look what we've done for you. Don't vote for [a competing union]."
>
> I can't say positively, but I think the union wants a say in decisions as far as their members are concerned. This would be a real chance for them to get input.
>
> It's an attempt to keep everybody happy.

> The union is always interested in new and innovative things, so that's why I think they would [support SDM].

> Because it is self-serving. They get a finger into more and more of what they would like to know. It allows them more power.

> Because it gives teachers more power. Which is where the power really should be. Because we live with the students everyday and we know the problems and what can and cannot be done.

> Of course the union would be for it. I think they are always for teachers having power and the best conditions that we can.

> I personally felt that this was a political thing between the union and the school board.

The responses above indicate that stakeholders initiated SDM without a great deal of faith in the motivation or support of either the district or the union. Stakeholder motivation to proceed seems to have been grounded in their own perception of the potential benefits and beneficiaries of SDM.

Consensus About Benefits and Beneficiaries

When asked about the goals for SDM, no one said that the goal was to "improve student achievement and strengthen the professionalization of teaching," (the district's stated goal), although responses did touch on both of those issues. Stakeholders expressed goals that were more often general than specific: to give stakeholders a role in identifying and solving school problems, to increase the ownership and responsibility stakeholders feel for decisions, to re-create the curriculum and the school to make it better for kids.

When asked about the potential benefits of SDM, the responses again tended to be general. Some respondents believed SDM would increase everyone's understanding of the consequences of decisions and would allow the local stakeholders an opportunity to create a better place for students to learn and for teachers to work. Other respondents said SDM would be a forum for better ideas by bringing more voices into the conversation about education at Neptune and that SDM would be an impetus for improved teaching because teachers would feel more ownership of the educational process.

When people spoke of their hopes for SDM, the responses were more personal and specific to Neptune. Several teachers agreed with the teacher who told us "Maybe we can solve some of the problems at this school, such as attendance and discipline." Several stakeholders cited a hope for unity, expressed by the teacher who said, "We're hoping it will create a way of working together, cooperatively and harmoniously, minimizing the friction." Others wanted a chance for everyone to be heard. "I think that if I were to hope, it would be that [SDM] could end the elitism that exists strongly in this school among the faculty," said a teacher.

When asked "Who will benefit from SDM?" stakeholders in every category said "the students." When asked how students would benefit, teachers, administrators, parents, and staff mentioned improving the educational environment for students. They said students would benefit from learning in an environment that modeled democracy.

Core Group of School SDM Leaders

Neptune's core group of SDM leaders included the principal, a teacher, and the union steward. The group attended district-wide meetings where they learned about the SDM project and received training in the skills of brainstorming and consensus-building. The training was provided by Bell South and coordinated by personnel from the district's Human Resources department. The goal of the training was to teach essential skills to a core group from each school who would then share their new skills with stakeholders at their schools and lead their schools through the beginning stages of SDM. In January, 1989, the core group presented the SDM proposal to the Neptune faculty.

Stakeholders Vote to Adopt SDM

Although the decision to adopt SDM as a restructuring strategy was made at the district level, the decision to adopt it at Neptune was made by a vote of the school's faculty. The process of becoming a SDM pilot school involved having the support of the principal, getting at least a 66% majority of the faculty to vote for participation, and applying to (and being accepted by) the district SDM Council. After the principal and 81% of the faculty voted to participate, Neptune applied and was accepted into the SDM project. Neptune was one of ten schools that joined the project in the fall of 1989.

During the time of initiating SDM, the district's reasons for adoption of the strategy were ambiguous, and that ambiguity would continue to manifest itself as the stakeholders moved to implement the program. Even at the school level, stakeholders did not devote much time to discussing the reason for doing (or not doing) SDM, but rather seemed to seize an idea that had intrinsic appeal.

While not providing clear goals or strong leadership, district personnel did provide essential training in collaborative decision making. When stakeholders applied the collaborative skills they had been taught, they reported a sense of almost universal inclusion in the process of identifying issues to address through SDM.

Although Neptune could not have become a SDM school without his support, the principal offered much more than just a willingness to go along with SDM. He believed that SDM would tap the expertise of a faculty he considered exceptionally talented. He convinced the stakeholders of his deep commitment to SDM and thereby provided some certainty of support that convinced stakeholders that their efforts would not be undermined. In light of stakeholders' uncertainty about district support, the principal's support was probably crucial.

The Neptune stakeholders expressed both idealistic and pragmatic reasons for adopting SDM. Whatever their reasons, the Neptune stakeholders felt capable of using SDM to create a better school for students and a better workplace for themselves.

Implementation

In this section, I present a chronology of key events that illuminate the change process through which the Neptune stakeholders traveled while implementing SDM. Each stage of implementation carried with it certain tasks and challenges. During the first year, stakeholders focused on the reform possibilities SDM offered and began start-up activities. During the second year, stakeholders clarified the meaning and practice of SDM by working through the process of sharing in decision making. In the third year, stakeholders began to see the consequences of their efforts, which included both accomplishments and conflict.

Year One: A Season of Possibilities

During the first year, stakeholders engaged in activities that would come to define the meaning of SDM at Neptune. They solicited participation, identified issues to be addressed, and created a governance structure based on democratic principles.

Soliciting participation. On February 27, 1990, the principal held meetings throughout the day with groups of teachers, who came into the conference room during their planning time. The principal and core group members discussed the SDM project with the teachers and encouraged everyone to participate. They also discussed a tentative governance structure and asked each department to select a representative to serve on the SDM Committee. The governance structure, as initially conceived by the core group, also included one parent representative and one representative from the non-instructional staff.

As soon as the SDM Committee was formed, core group members taught the brainstorming and consensus-building skills to the representatives who then used their newly acquired skills to solicit concerns from their own constituent groups. Representatives took constituent concerns to the SDM Committee, and returned to their constituent groups with feedback (via the SDM Committee) from other groups of stakeholders. In this way, stakeholders spent the spring of 1990 identifying issues they wanted to address through SDM.

Identifying issues. By May, 1990, stakeholders identified five issues which would be addressed through SDM: attendance, curriculum, budget, discipline, and STEPS (the school's advisory program that linked each teacher with a small group of students.) During our interviews, almost all respondents could tell us the issues to be addressed through SDM and they all seemed to agree that those were the most important problems at Neptune.

Democratic governance structure. Neptune stakeholders established a SDM Committee that included the core group as non-voting members and one representative from each of twelve constituent groups. The constituent groups included nine curriculum departments (e.g. English, Math, Science), administrators, non-instructional personnel, and parents.

Stakeholders debated the composition of the governance structure. The structure for which there was eventual consensus gave each department one vote, thereby diluting the power of large departments.

Defining Shared Decision Making. The first interviews of the formative evaluation were conducted just before the February 27 meetings. During those interviews, and again in May, we asked participants to define shared decision making. When asked "what does shared decision making mean to you?" respondents gave answers that fell along a continuum from just being heard to changing the decision-making structure of the school:

> ...an opportunity to express our opinions.
>
> We, as teachers, [will] have some input instead of everything coming from the top.

> They [district] set the parameters. We were told that hiring and budget would still be maintained by the administration. I do think we'll be able to affect the decisions.
>
> It's the faculty in conjunction with the administration making decisions that affect the school. ["Decisions about what?"] Everything would be negotiable. ["Should anything be out of bounds?"] Not necessarily.
>
> It means everyone working together as a team...to get things implemented, things we haven't been able to do.
>
> SDM is having teachers and the non-instructional staff involve themselves in setting goals and deciding how they're going to reach their goals.
>
> I think it will be a very interesting change to have faculty make decisions rather than the administration.
>
> I would say it means that instead of administration deciding what's to be done, it's going to be put in the hands of faculty.
>
> It's a cooperative effort where the principal releases decision making, either part or whole, on all facets of running the school.

Although stakeholders offered a variety of meanings for the concept of shared decision making, their definitions generally suggested broader inclusion of stakeholders and ownership of school problems and solutions. Neither the district nor the union imposed on stakeholders an official definition of SDM, nor did they make explicit the overall goals of the project. When asked, respondents defined SDM in terms of making decisions or providing input for decisions. In practice, Neptune stakeholders defined SDM as a way to address five clearly defined issues. By the end of the 1989-90 school year, Neptune stakeholders had seized the idea of SDM and made concrete steps toward implementing the concept at their school.

Year Two: Working Through the Process of Making Shared Decisions

Throughout the second year, stakeholders clarified the meaning of SDM at Neptune. Stakeholders were involved in school-wide deliberations of issues, in refining the governance structure, and in refining the parameters SDM.

School-wide deliberations. We visited the Neptune campus again in February, 1991, and found the stakeholders deeply involved in the work of SDM. Subcommittees of the SDM Committee were formed for each of the five issues. The attendance subcommittee had a proposal ready for consideration by the SDM Committee and the constituent groups. The members of the curriculum subcommittee were struggling to develop curriculum and scheduling options for the school. The subcommittees did not rush their work. "We're planning for the long haul, [we're not proposing] band-aid solutions or change for the sake of change," one teacher told us.

Refining the governance structure. Another event of the fall was the collapse of consensus. Most respondents told us "Consensus didn't work." A formal governance structure, with majority-rule provisions, was in place. When asked if any particular event had caused the demise of consensus, the answer was unequivocal: "Yeah. Absolutely. When the principal tried to put through [a scheduling proposal]" a teacher told us. In one department, the faculty members had voted to support the plan, but the representative, not bound by rules to do otherwise, voted against the plan in the SDM Committee. The ensuing anger led to widespread consensus for the adoption of majority-rule, compelling each representative to vote the will of his or her constituent group.

Refining the parameters of SDM. When we arrived in mid-February for an on-site visit, everyone told us a version of the "Parking Lot" story. The principal had asked the SDM Committee to decide how spaces in a new parking lot would be allocated to faculty and staff. Several parking proposals emerged during deliberations of the SDM Committee and the various constituent groups. School employees voted and a lottery method was selected. People drew numbers for spaces and the issue seemed settled. When it was discovered that a number of people who had traditionally parked in reserved spaces close to the building did not have their spaces included in the lottery, the faculty and staff refused to allow the reserved spaces and demanded that a second lottery drawing be conducted.

The parking lot issue consumed a lot of time and energy. Five or six meetings over a two month period were devoted to the parking lot. Several respondents related the story as an example of a "colossal" waste of time. "Is there anything to be learned from this experience?" we asked. "Sure. We learned what not to waste our time on." Others said the parking lot issue provided a "trial run," an opportunity to let a decision work its way through the governance structure, and an opportunity to see if the administration would let the process work.

We visited the school again in May. Subcommittees had been working steadily and had proposals for an attendance plan, a new STEPS program, and a computer class for bilingual students. Respondents said that progress was being made on issues stakeholders thought were important. As the year ended, participants expressed mixed feelings about SDM, but displayed a generally hopeful attitude. A new chairperson was elected for the SDM Committee and representatives were in place to begin again in the fall.

Year Three: Accomplishments and Conflict

By the third school year, stakeholders had worked through the process of getting started and were beginning to understand the implications of SDM at Neptune. They were ready to implement proposals addressing issues they considered important and for which they had devised solutions. During the year, they would begin to see consequences of their efforts, encountering conflict both within the school community and with the district.

Accomplishments. By the time we arrived for an on-site visit in November, 1991, the attendance plan was in place and showing good results. Attendance had gone from 89% to 94%, meaning that one hundred more students were in class each day. One hundred fewer absences each day lessened the work of the school staff. Teacher frustration decreased, as this teacher's comment reflected: "Now I can plan things for Friday." Under the new plan, absences were neither excused nor unexcused. Absences were simply counted, and after a certain number, the student failed. An appeal board, composed of teachers, parents, deans, and the principal, could modify consequences but the student was responsible for preparing and presenting the appeal. Student responsibility was cited by respondents as the key element of the plan.

Conflict within. When we visited in May of 1992, people were anxious to share stories with us and the tone of their stories was emotional. After a year-and-a-half of deliberations, the curriculum subcommittee made a proposal for a new schedule that made classes longer and required fewer class changes each day. The subcommittee members believed the longer class periods would allow teachers to teach in new ways, to engage students in greater depth and with fewer interruptions. They wanted to improve instruction and increase students' opportunities to learn. A curriculum subcommittee member told us "the new schedule will affect the presentation of curriculum. That's the kicker. Some people will have to adjust, but I think they will find, once they get used to it, they will get more curriculum covered, more efficiently, more effectively, and kids' test scores will go up." Some faculty members resisted the initial proposal, but the SDM Committee accepted a compromise schedule which provided for six regular periods three days a week and two-hour blocks of three classes on the other two days.

One teacher explained faculty resistance to the plan this way: "Teachers will always begin with issues near and dear to their hearts, like discipline and attendance, things that require students to do things differently. But watch out when the issues get close to home, like curriculum." Another teacher said, "You have to break down the barriers toward restructuring the curriculum. It sets up in [teachers'] minds such resistance and anxiety, and in some cases such fear, that you have to be very careful how you go about it." Another aspect of teacher resistance was explained by the teacher who said, "Making decisions implies accepting responsibility for those decisions." The teacher suggested that it may be easier to let someone else make decisions and take the responsibility for those decisions.

The concerns of most faculty members seemed to center on two issues: the proposal itself and the process by which the proposal was adopted. One teacher said "Of course, people angry about the process seem to be the people who didn't like the schedule." Some teachers were concerned about the difficulty of learning new ways to teach, as reflected in this teacher's comment: "What are teachers going to do with low-level students for 100 minutes? They can't even hold their attention now." People who expressed those concerns were not necessarily people who taught low-level students, and several teachers who taught such students told us that the new schedule offered exciting teaching opportunities, even while it would require learning new teaching strategies.

The issue of the process through which the schedule was adopted may yet prove to be pivotal to the implementation of SDM at Neptune. A few teachers in a large department were opposed to the proposal and began to question the governance structure that gave a single vote to each constituent group, regardless of the size of the group. Teachers who favored more votes for larger constituencies never acknowledged that parents, as the largest constituent group, would be given a majority voice in all decisions.

The conflict aroused by the proposed schedule exceeded even that of the parking lot issue. In one department, the representative to the SDM Committee was subjected to public verbal abuse because "she failed to jog the memory of the curriculum subcommittee chairperson" concerning an issue important to some people in the department. Said a teacher in that department, "The powers that be in the department just chewed her up." Indeed, people at Neptune "do not harbor opinions quietly."

On the day we arrived, the school community had just learned that three faculty members had sent anonymous letters to the superintendent, who had once taught at Neptune, complaining that the principal was taking advantage of SDM. In one letter, the writer said the principal had "rammed the new schedule down our throats." As a result, a representative of the superintendent was on campus to find out more about the situation.

On the other issue, that of learning new instructional strategies, teachers and administrators lost no time in planning for inservice opportunities. The members of one department, where there had been initial resistance to the schedule, were already developing new programs. Faculty members were visiting other schools for ideas. Subcommittee members were preparing a waiver request to clear the way for implementation of the new schedule in the fall. The waiver request was necessary in order for Neptune to have a schedule different from that already approved by the district, and to make arrangements for transporting students.

Conflict with the district. All stakeholders were represented at the waiver request presentation to the superintendent. A parent representative spoke in favor of the plan, as did a student representative. The principal and teachers also made presentations. After little discussion, the proposal was rejected. Later, a teacher would say, "He seemed to already have his mind made up before we made the presentation."

According to people at the meeting, the superintendent gave two reasons for rejecting the request. He told the group that the proposal merely tinkered with the bell schedule and did not offer the substantive change the district sought. Further, the district would lose funding based on contact hours, even though the proposal would result in savings for transportation.

Neptune stakeholders had to confront the rejection of something for which they had worked very hard and gauge the effect of that rejection on the future of SDM. One faculty leader said, "I see tough times ahead" and went on to sum up the situation this way:

> I wish they [district hierarchy] would understand how much work is involved in what we're doing. If it [SDM] was put forward because somebody on the school board or somebody in the union thinks this will keep us quiet, maybe we are [creating] a kind of quiet revolution that they are not expecting.

Stakeholders contacted in December, 1992, indicated that democracy lived on at Neptune through an expanded School Improvement Team that is continuing the work of the SDM Committee. Seventy-five minute periods were in place and people were experimenting with new instructional practices. One person said of SDM, "It's here to stay, even if they change the name of it."

Summary

At the end of three years, Neptune stakeholders were continuing to clarify the meaning and practice of SDM. They had involved a broad base of stakeholders, defined the meaning of SDM for their school, created a governance structure, proposed and implemented changes, and faced conflict from within and from the district.

In interviews, respondents provided a variety of definitions of SDM, but by their actions, they defined SDM as a way to address specific school issues. Neptune stakeholders assumed responsibility for education at their school through intensive school-wide committee work and deliberations that resulted in proposals aimed at a better instructional program for students.

Neptune stakeholders achieved widespread consensus on a governance structure that included a variety of stakeholders and was considered by most to be fair and responsive. Some people (including the researchers) feared that the collapse of consensus would lead to win/loss situations and would threaten the future of SDM. Most stakeholders, however, supported the move to majority rule, with its clearly defined rules and procedures for decision making.

Stakeholders achieved concrete changes at their school through SDM. The implementation of their attendance plan resulted in 100 more students in class every day and less stress on the part of teachers and staff. The scheduling proposal, even though gutted by the superintendent, did result in slightly extended periods and the development of some new instructional strategies. The Neptune SDM story is an account of educators and other stakeholders investing extraordinary amounts of time, energy, and dedication to a process marked by uncertainty, ambiguity, role changes, and conflict, certain they could make the school better for students.

CHAPTER V
THE NEPTUNE EXPERIENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE THEORY

At Neptune High School, as in many other schools across America, stakeholders are instituting shared decision making (SDM) as a school-improvement strategy. SDM is a democratic, collaborative approach to school management that brings together the collective knowledge and expertise of the school's stakeholders to address school problems. While SDM seems to hold great potential for improving schools, researchers have found SDM implementation to be slow and difficult. In this study, I sought to explore SDM's implementation difficulties within the framework of organizational change theory. I posed this question:
What organizational change theory helps us understand what happened when Neptune adopted and implemented SDM?

The question is important to those who wish to help school stakeholders adopt and implement SDM and other participant-constructed change. Most school improvement research is grounded in traditional change theory. That theory presupposes that change is initiated from the top and that most innovations are designed by experts and delivered to teachers. SDM does not fit that model; it is not clear, therefore, whether traditional change theory is applicable to these newer, bottom-up, constructivist efforts at school improvement. Change agents, researchers, and practitioners need to know if traditional organizational change theory is applicable to non-traditional change efforts such as SDM. If it is not applicable, or if it is only partially applicable, they need to know what a better theory might be like in order to help participants through the change process.

At the start of my study, I posed four facilitating questions: 1) To what extent does the Neptune experience fit a traditional organizational change model? 2) To what extent does the Neptune experience confirm variables for success or failure identified in the organizational change and SDM literature? 3) Does a constructivist approach to organizational change help us understand the Neptune experience? 4) What are the elements of a change theory that explains the adoption and implementation of SDM, a participant-constructed innovation?

Shared decision making is one of many "participant-constructed" reforms being tried in public education today. SDM, like other constructivist approaches to school improvement, requires that school stakeholders define the character and dimensions of their school improvement effort. A number of innovations on the educational horizon fall into the category of "participant-constructed" innovations, including whole language, professional development schools, accelerated schools, the Coalition of Essential Schools, and shared decision making. Each is unique, but they share important characteristics.

These innovations are open-ended efforts designed to improve an entire organization rather than pre-packaged solutions to clearly-defined problems. Constructivist innovations are intended to empower the participants for ongoing, reflective, and adaptive change. They do not come to practitioners via the Research-Development-Diffusion (RD&D) tradition in which experts develop solutions and pass them on to teachers for implementation. Ideas for constructed innovations may be borrowed from elsewhere but school stakeholders choose the innovation, define its meaning, and adapt it to fit their situation.

Even though collaborative decision making has proven beneficial in business and industry (Kanter, 1983; Morgan, 1988; Peters & Waterman, 1982), the implementation of SDM in schools has been difficult (Clune & White, 1988; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990; Sickler, 1988). Traditional school organizational structures and entrenched bureaucracies contribute to the difficulty of implementing SDM in schools. Another impediment, the one I address with this study, is the absence of a "road map" that would guide stakeholders through the process of adopting and implementing SDM and other similar innovations. Such a map does not exist because change theory researchers have focused primarily on pre-packaged innovations in the Research-Development-Diffusion (RD&D) tradition. They have neither identified factors that contribute to the successful adoption and implementation of constructed innovations nor developed a theory to explain the process. I sought to address those problems with this study.

I studied Neptune High School for three years as stakeholders adopted and implemented SDM. The school re-organized itself to make decisions collaboratively, witnessed the emergence of new leaders and a new style of leadership, involved many stakeholders in the decision making process, identified and ranked school-improvement issues, planned solutions to identified problems, and began to implement their plans. Neptune is an example of a school that has successfully implemented SDM.

I presented the Neptune High School case study in Chapter IV. I now return to the questions that guided this study. To address the first question (Does the Neptune experience fit a traditional model of organizational change?), I present an analysis of Rogers' model of organizational change. Next, I turn to lessons from the Neptune stakeholders to determine the extent to which the Neptune experience confirms variables for success or failure identified in the organizational change and SDM literature. Finally, I move toward a theory of constructivist organizational change, and suggest key elements that must be included in such a theory. The elements I suggest are drawn from Rogers' model, lessons learned in the Neptune case study, and from the sparse literature on constructivist change efforts. I conclude with implications the study may have for staff development and organizational change research.

Rogers' Model of Organizational Change

Organizational change theory and the models that have emerged from change theory research were designed to guide successful organizational change. Over the years, a several models have come from that research. I selected Rogers' (1983) model of organizational change as the standard against which to measure the Neptune experience. It is the most frequently cited model in organizational change literature. Writers and researchers refer to Rogers' model in disciplines as diverse as medicine, rural sociology, communications, business, anthropology, and education.

Rogers' model includes the stages found in many well-known change models. The stages vary from model to model, but researchers identify three: initiation, implementation, and follow-through (Rothman & Wilson, 1988). Different researchers use different labels for each stage [for example, Lewin (1951) used the terms "unfreezing," "movement," and "refreezing"] but the meaning is the same from one model to the next. Beckhard & Harris (1987) called their three stages the "present state," the "transition state," and the "future state." The models of Lippit (1958) and Havelock (1973), although not constructed in three parts, can easily be reconfigured to fit into three stages (Rothman & Wilson, 1988). Rogers' model is designed in two parts, initiation and implementation, but the final element of the second phase, routinizing, amounts to a third phase.

In chapter two, I described Rogers' (1983) organizational change model. In the case study, I presented a chronology of SDM adoption and implementation at Neptune using the elements of Rogers' model as the framework for the presentation. I return to the model here and compare the model to the Neptune experience.

Initiation Phase

Rogers' model begins with an Initiation Phase that includes an agenda-setting stage and a matching stage. Rogers assumes that members of the organization will complete this phase before making the decision to adopt an innovation.

Agenda-setting. Rogers envisioned the agenda-setting stage as a time to define a problem and seek possible solutions. The process may involve either the participants, or management, or both.

The SDM project in Seabreeze County was initiated at the district level through negotiations between the union and the district. The negotiations did not include a process of identifying school problems and exploring possible solutions that might address those problems. The negotiations focused specifically on instituting SDM. Although neither the union nor the Seabreeze County school officials engaged in an agenda-setting stage, both alluded to possible problems in the schools that needed to be addressed. A pamphlet published by the union and the district suggested that schools turn their attention to preparing students for the world of work. SDM was described as a strategy to improve student achievement, further professionalize teaching, and prepare students for the work force.

SDM was initiated at Neptune when the school's core group (the union steward, the principal, and a teacher) brought the idea to the faculty. Prior to adopting SDM, school stakeholders did not go through a process of identifying specific problems and generating possible solutions to address those problems.

Matching. In the matching stage of the model, Rogers described a process of determining that the proposed innovation could actually be implemented and would address the problem identified in the agenda-setting stage. Neither the district nor the school stakeholders engaged in the matching stage Rogers envisioned.

The district/union pamphlet about the project stated that little was known about how to successfully implement SDM and that there was little research to support the assumed benefits of SDM. At Neptune, the idea of SDM was discussed informally, but not in terms of its efficacy in addressing problems stakeholders had identified.

Rogers' own explanation of the agenda-setting and matching stages is somewhat ambiguous. While he acknowledges that organizations can, and frequently do, come across solutions and then match them to problems, he provides a specific definition for his view of agenda-setting: "One or more individuals in an organization identify an important problem and then seek an innovation as one means of coping with the problem" (1983, p.362). He then states that the process can be either problem-initiated or innovation-initiated.

Some reconciliation of Rogers' apparent ambiguity may lie in what he implies about how and what kinds of innovations reach organizations. While members of an organization are always aware of problems, they have limited information about solutions that might exist. When they hear about a good idea, perhaps through advertising or a presentation, they may recognize a way to use in it their organization. In essence, Rogers is saying that members of an organization recognize the benefit of the innovation and simply adopt it. For whatever reason, Rogers chose not to include this alternative adoption process in his model and clings instead to the problem-initiated format.

Implementation Phase

The second phase of Rogers' model is the Implementation Phase. It includes a re-defining and restructuring stage, a clarifying stage, and a routinizing stage.

Re-defining, restructuring. In the model, the first stage of implementation is to adapt the innovation to a particular situation by re-defining it and adjusting the organization to accommodate it. Rogers' language assumed innovations would come to schools well defined and fully developed. All school stakeholders would have to do is adapt the innovation to fit their particular school's situation. At Neptune, the implementation phase began with a process of defining the innovation and restructuring the organization.

With SDM, as with other participant-constructed innovations, stakeholders' must both define and design the innovation they will implement; they do not re-define a pre-defined innovation. The Seabreeze district did not provide a definition of SDM for the school, and it did not occur to participants that they needed to debate its meaning. The absence of a definition caused initial confusion. Over time, however, participants did achieve a common understanding of SDM. At Neptune, SDM was defined as a collaborative effort to identify school problems, design solutions, and implement those solutions. SDM was not a pre-packaged solution to an already defined problem, but rather a mechanism that allowed stakeholders to identify problems and frame their own solutions. One administrator used a computer analogy to describe the process: "SDM is your DOS program. Once you install your DOS program, you can bring other programs through it. But you need that [DOS] program [for the computer to work]."

The former decision-making structure had to be altered to accommodate SDM, and when making that alteration, Neptune stakeholders entered the restructuring stage of Rogers' model. Several events involving the principal provided evidence of restructuring. For example, during our first visit, the principal and members of the core group described the SDM governance structure they had designed for the school. Subsequently, teachers designed a different structure. Teachers told us the principal "was very gracious" when his plan was turned down. They felt his attitude indicated respect for the faculty decision making process. When a scheduling plan that the principal wanted was defeated, he again respected the group's decision. As the decision-making structure of the school was being altered, the principal did not stop making decisions, but other stakeholders were provided with an avenue that facilitated stakeholder-initiated changes. When we asked how changes were made at the school, teachers and staff reported that issues previously taken to the principal were now taken to the SDM Committee.

Clarifying. During the clarifying stage of Rogers' model, participants in an organization come to understand the innovation and its implications, and may find it necessary to address problems that arise. The stakeholders at Neptune went through this stage as they learned to distinguish which issues are worthy of debate and to deal with the consequences of their decisions.

Neptune stakeholders learned from experience that some decisions do not warrant full-scale SDM involvement. A critical event was what came to be known as "the parking lot decision." It took the council several meetings and over two months to decide how parking spaces would be allocated. Some people sounded weary when they told the "parking lot decision" story: "I guess you've heard about the parking lot..." Nevertheless, most respondents said the decision-making experience was valuable. One person said, "Every group will have to have its parking lot issue," a time to learn first hand what is worth deliberating.

Stakeholders had to deal with the consequences of their decisions and the effect those decisions had on teachers' professional lives. It was relatively easy to deal with issues that involved student behavior, such as attendance and discipline. It was much more difficult to make and enforce decisions that affected teacher behavior, such as longer periods, new instructional strategies, or different relationships with students.

At the end of three years, the Neptune stakeholders were still in the "clarifying" stage. They continued to address the implications of SDM as they refined their decision-making processes, evaluated the results of their decisions, and began to define the parameters of the decision-making structure. Perhaps the clarifying stage will be lengthy or even ongoing with any participant-constructed innovation, as meanings are invented and re-invented.

Routinizing. In Rogers' model, the routinizing stage is the time when an innovation loses its separate identity and becomes a part of the organization. Unless the small core of resistors is successful in derailing it, SDM will likely remain in place at Neptune. Respondents generally agreed that they would not quietly return to the subservient roles they played in the past and could not accept a governance structure that excluded stakeholder participation. This is the way one faculty leader summarized the status of SDM at the end of three years:

> I think we are accomplishing a lot, changing the way people look at their roles. It's just so easy to come in at 9:00, leave at 4:00, and let the principal take all the responsibility. But now [with SDM] you have to worry about the new attendance program. You have to ask "How are we going to get these kids motivated?" "Do we want this program or that?" That's where we are right now.

How Useful is Rogers' model?

Parts of the Neptune experience fit Rogers' model, but the model did not fully predict the events at Neptune. Neptune was reasonably successful at implementing a complex, substantive innovation, but stakeholders did not go through the process of either agenda-setting or matching. The Initiation Phase of Rogers' model held no predictive power in the Neptune experience. Some stakeholders had read about collaborative models of decision making. Others recalled references to SDM in graduate education courses, in their own professional reading, and in the popular press. But prior to adopting SDM as a school-improvement strategy, Neptune stakeholders did not go through a process of identifying specific problems and seeking solutions to those problems.

Rogers' model included a time for re-defining an innovation and restructuring the organization to accommodate it. Instead of re-defining a pre-defined innovation, Neptune stakeholders invented SDM as they implemented it. That process of invention is consistent with the constructivist nature of SDM. Stakeholders did re-organize the decision making structure of the school, and in so doing, they followed Roger's model.

The model includes a time for clarifying an innovation, a time to understand an innovation and its implications. Perhaps that stage never really ends when the innovation is open-ended, as is the case with SDM. Rogers assumes that participants will come to understand a well-defined innovation and its implications for their school. Some adaptations will be needed, according to Rogers, but problems will be worked out and eventually the innovation will be routinized. With SDM, as with other participant-constructed innovations, stakeholders engage in a process of ongoing reflection and adaptation. As problems are solved, new ways to improve the school surface and are addressed.

To a certain extent, SDM was "routinized" at Neptune. New, inclusive decision making procedures are now in place and a democratic structure exists for making decisions. Stakeholders know that the district can destroy SDM simply by replacing the SDM principal or frustrating stakeholder efforts to improve their school. As long as schools are imbedded in hierarchical bureaucracies answerable to political boards, stakeholders can never be certain that their decisions are final (Chubb & Moe, 1992).

The limitations of Rogers' model are partially imbedded in his presumption of a hierarchically structured organization. In Chapter Two, I quoted Rogers' definition of an organization as a "stable system of individuals who work together to achieve common goals through a hierarchy of ranks and a division of labor" (1983, p. 348). SDM, like most other participant-constructed innovations, levels the hierarchical structure by moving decision-making power close to those most affected by the decisions. Freedom to create solutions and to construct the meaning and dimension of those solutions is generally incompatible with hierarchical bureaucracies. It is little wonder, therefore, that Rogers' model fails to predict or explain what transpired at Neptune High.

The efficacy of the model is further limited by the facilitative and constructivist nature of SDM. SDM is not a specific solution to a specific problem. It is a structure that allows stakeholders to identify problems and generate solutions to those problems. SDM is not a "solution" in the sense that a problem is solved and closure is achieved. SDM may be invented and re-invented by school stakeholders to meet the evolving needs of students and teachers.

Case study research does not test theory in the way that a controlled experiment might. Nor does case study research generally produce theory. With this study I have, however, compared a school's change experience to a theoretical model. I found that the model did not fully predict or explain the experience. Further, I have identified through the case study essential elements for SDM success, some problems SDM schools are likely to face, and factors that can help make SDM work. I address those essential elements, problems, and factors in the next section entitled "Lessons from the Neptune Stakeholders." Together with the lessons from Rogers, these lessons from the Neptune stakeholders suggest elements of a theory of constructivist organizational change that I will propose.

Lessons From the Neptune Stakeholders

In the organizational literature and in SDM studies, researchers identified factors that were associated with the success or failure of organizational change efforts. Analysis of the Neptune experience revealed that certain elements are likely to contribute to SDM success, certain problems are likely to interfere with SDM success, and steps can be taken that will help make SDM work. In the following analysis, I review the literature from organizational and SDM studies within the context of the Neptune experience.

Essential Elements for SDM Success

Neptune's experience confirmed that certain characteristics enhance a school's ability to institute SDM. Three factors in particular contributed to a successful change effort at Neptune: a risk-taking culture, leadership that empowered others, and appropriate training.

A risk-taking culture. A risk-taking culture nurtures creative solutions and provides protection for employees or managers who take reasonable chances to improve the product or service of the organization. In a risk-taking culture, people expect and thrive on change, always looking for better ways to do things. Risk-taking environments and support for experimentation make it more likely that participants will accept and initiate innovations (David, 1989b; Kanter, 1983; Morgan, 1988).

Neptune stakeholders did not have to create a risk-taking environment. When SDM began, such an environment already existed. The teacher who said, "We are always trying new things," captured the innovative spirit of the school. Stakeholders approached SDM with the confidence of people accustomed to change.

Leadership that empowers others. Empowering leadership was identified in previous studies as a factor that facilitated the change to SDM (David, 1989a; Smith & Purkey, 1985). Empowering leaders reject authoritarian or manipulative strategies of control and instead seek to build communities in which any participant may provide leadership. Empowering leaders provide information, remove obstacles, and acquire resources to enhance their organizations.

The principal at Neptune had a vision of empowerment and inclusion, of tapping into the knowledge and vision of the school's stakeholders. He said his goal was "not to dominate. My intention is to have other people's leadership come up." He expected to benefit not only from their input but from their increased knowledge about fiscal, legal, and bureaucratic constraints. He expected the school to be better and his job to be more manageable when responsibility for decisions, and ownership of those decisions, were shared by all stakeholders.

Training. Researchers' findings about the importance of adequate, appropriate, and ongoing training (Diegmueller, 1991; Katzenmeyer & Reid, 1991) were confirmed by the experience at Neptune. Personnel in the district's Human Resources Department arranged the training for each school's core group members, who in turn taught the skills to others at their schools. Stakeholders learned skills such as brainstorming and consensus-building, and new ways of working together. After putting their new skills into practice, respondents reported an almost universal sense of inclusion in the conversation about education at Neptune.

During the second year of SDM at Neptune, the principal arranged for additional training through Bell South. One teacher who was asked near the end of the study what advice she would give to schools planning to implement SDM, said, "Get the Bell South training. Get it early, and include everyone." Bell South is a corporation with a tradition of collaborative decision making. Over the years, they have developed training programs for collaboration skills. The training includes conflict management, team and trust building, problem solving, decision making, and group dynamics.

While training developed key collaborative skills, some lessons were learned by trial and error. For example, stakeholders could have been told not to waste their time on insignificant issues, but they internalized that lesson after spending a lot of time deciding where people would park.

Problems SDM Schools are Likely to Face

Although Neptune stakeholders were reasonably successful at implementing SDM, some stumbling blocks slowed the process and created confusion. Goal ambiguity, uncertainty about district support, resistance to change, and time constraints seemed to be the most significant stumbling blocks at Neptune.

Goal ambiguity. Goal ambiguity has been a problem for groups attempting to implement SDM (Conley, 1989; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Wood & Caldwell, 1991). That is, groups often found themselves implementing SDM without being certain why they were doing it or what they were supposed to achieve. Without clear goals, the groups often lost direction and were unable to gauge success or failure of their efforts.

Neptune stakeholders did not recognize goal ambiguity as a problem and did not list it when asked to identify SDM stumbling blocks. Stakeholders shared widespread consensus that SDM would be beneficial to students and teachers but when asked to identify the goals of the project, participants gave widely varying responses and no one mentioned the district's stated goals. As often as not, Neptune respondents cited successful implementation of SDM as their goal. According to district and union publications, the goal of SDM was to restructure the schools so that student achievement and the professionalization of teachers were enhanced.

Stakeholders at Neptune were not guided by clear district goals for SDM. As other schools were brought into the project in succeeding years (what the district called second and third-tier schools), the district clarified the meaning and purpose of SDM. Neptune and other first-tier schools, however, were left to create their own goals.

Uncertainty about district support. SDM researchers found that school districts, even while sponsoring SDM projects, often failed to restructure at the district level to provide support for school-level projects (Dentler, Flowers, & Mulvey 1987; White, 1989). Neptune stakeholders believed this to be the case in Seabreeze County. The teacher who said, "SDM only exists from the principal down," reflected the views of many who expressed ambivalence or distrust of district-level support.

Neptune stakeholders were also uncertain of long-term support from the district. Even during our first interviews, some respondents said they were hesitant to invest their time and energy in SDM because they believed it was just another "fad" that the district would support for awhile and then reject. Whether the district did or did not intend to permanently change to SDM, stakeholders' investment in the project was inhibited by their perception of uncertain support.

Resistance to change. Stakeholders frequently cited "resistors" as a stumbling block to SDM. Respondents generally identified resistors by category rather than as individuals. One category of resistors was long-time teachers (referred to by one teacher as "hard-bitten cynics"). Another category of resistors included mid-level administrators at the school or district level.

Some teachers did resist SDM and their resistance slowed SDM progress. Some refused to participate, some tried to revert to traditional deal-making, others blocked decisions with procedural battles, and three wrote anonymous letters to the superintendent. Asked how many people fell into the category of faculty resistors, respondents consistently mentioned numbers that ranged from 7% to 10% of the faculty, but no one, even those specifically identified as SDM critics, identified themselves as resistors. When we asked what motivated resistors, respondents said the resistors were unwilling to change, afraid of losing "turf," or were just unwilling to do the extra work that SDM required.

Researchers have consistently encountered the problem of mid-level managers who had trouble moving to collaborative roles (Conley, 1989; David, 1989b; Dentler, Flowers, & Mulvey, 1987; Harrison, Killion, & Mitchell, 1989; White, 1989). At the school, mid-level managers were the assistant principals. In the district, they were the area superintendents. Neither of these groups were given responsibility for facilitating SDM and both groups were cited at one time or another as SDM resistors. Respondents were vague about specific acts of resistance by people in either of these groups, so it is difficult to gauge the effect of mid-level managers' resistance.

Time constraints. SDM is a time-consuming process. Even stakeholders who anticipated the investment of extra effort were surprised by how long it took to gather input, identify and rank school improvement issues, consider possible solutions, poll constituents, and finally vote on a plan of action. When we asked teachers to identify impediments to SDM, many answered in one word, "Time."

SDM is not a quick fix, and, depending on their state of readiness, some schools take longer than others to produce results. At the end of three years, Neptune stakeholders had made progress toward instituting SDM, but they were just beginning to address the instructional practices of the school. Both in terms of short-term investment and long-term results, time constraints continue to be a source of frustration at Neptune.

Ways to Help SDM Work

While only the school's stakeholders can construct the meaning and dimensions of SDM, they can learn from the Neptune experience what problems they may need to overcome and what will help them become a successful SDM school. The

Neptune experience suggests that stakeholders in successful SDM schools will clarify goals, assess sources of resistance, allow for enough time, learn collaboration skills, adopt new ways of thinking about leadership, and develop a risk-free environment.

Clarify goals. Neptune adopted and implemented SDM without the benefit of clearly defined goals. Stakeholders were successful in many ways with their change effort, but without clearly articulated goals, stakeholders sometimes lacked direction and, more importantly, had no way to assess progress.

Goals have consequences in terms of deliberations, actions, and the determination of success. If the goal at Neptune had been an unambiguous mandate to improve student achievement for all students, stakeholders might not have spent 2-3 months deciding where people would park. Their attendance plan might have included an evaluative element to gauge the plan's effect on student achievement. If the goal at Neptune had been to focus first on learning how to make shared decisions, stakeholders might have felt less frustrated by the 2-3 months spent deciding where people would park. They would have seen it as a necessary experience. In fact, some did see it that way. Regardless of the goal, stakeholders seem to benefit from clarity.

Assess sources of resistance. Many Neptune stakeholders were stunned by the actions of SDM resistors.

To the SDM supporters, resistance appeared to be rooted in a desire to preserve the status quo when it was obvious to the supporters that the school was failing to meet the needs of a substantial number of students. It is impossible to do more than speculate about the motivations of resistors since no one identified himself or herself as a resistor or volunteered reasons for resisting SDM, but individuals may have many reasons for resisting change. For some, the change to a collaborative decision-making structure will rob them of power they possessed when they could make deals on their own. Others will be unable or unwilling to do the work required for collaboration. Still others will be so accustomed to isolation and non-interference that collaboration and decision making will be very uncomfortable. What is clear from the Neptune data is that a few resistors, whatever their motivation, worked to sabotage SDM, and their efforts slowed SDM progress.

One group of resistors seemed to be defined with some clarity. Sirtonik and Clark (1988) warned that those who benefit from things as they are may be a source of resistance to change in schools, and the Neptune experience confirmed that view. Some long-time teachers had carved out a comfortable niche for themselves as the teachers of high-status students. We were told they could demand preferential schedules and classrooms, partly because they had the influence of the high achievers and the high achievers' parents behind them. When the new decision-making structure began to focus attention on changes that affected the teaching and curriculum of those teachers, some went to great lengths to sabotage SDM.

Learn the skills of collaboration. For many stakeholders, especially teachers, overcoming isolation and facing conflict may be a painful process. Neptune stakeholders had to learn about group dynamics: working as a team, trusting and depending on each other, addressing issues in ways that did not hurt or alienate people.

Neptune stakeholders also learned practical skills, such as brainstorming, helping different groups of stakeholders work comfortably together, running meetings, setting up effective communication networks, and evaluating their programs. After three years in the SDM project, stakeholders frequently cited their training in group dynamics and group process skills as essential to their success.

Allow for enough time. Restructuring a school, whatever strategy is used, is a resource-hungry proposition (Fullan & Miles, 1992). It is difficult to exaggerate the amount of time (and, of course, money) required to implement SDM. Even those Neptune stakeholders who anticipated expending considerable time on SDM were frustrated by the slowness of the process. Stakeholders who expect to implement SDM quickly or expect SDM to produce significant changes quickly will be disappointed and discouraged.

Adopt new ways of thinking about leadership. The Neptune principal approached SDM with a vision of empowering stakeholders to make informed decisions about school issues and assume ownership for those decisions. He did not give up his responsibility for making decisions while the other stakeholders learned SDM. He provided information and resources that facilitated SDM and he respected decisions made by the SDM Committee.

New leaders emerged at Neptune and they tended to be different from the old faculty leaders in that they were recognized as collaborators and listeners. The model of critical leadership suggested by Foster (1986) and analyzed within the context of the Neptune experience by Johnson (1993) provides excellent guidance for school practitioners embarking on SDM. Leadership, following the critical model, resides in the community rather than in a position and is manifest in leadership acts. Any member of the community may perform an act of leadership.

Develop a risk-free environment. The Neptune stakeholders had a well-established risk-taking culture before they embarked on the SDM project. While the "can-do" spirit of Neptune resulted from years of trying new things, schools without that heritage can begin to create environments where people attempt innovative solutions, secure in the knowledge they will maintain the support of colleagues and administrators even if the innovations are unsuccessful.

How do the Lessons from Neptune Contribute to an Understanding of the Change Process?

The elements for success identified at Neptune help us understand why Rogers' model does not explain the Neptune experience. Rogers' model includes a stage of matching an innovation to an identified problem, but not a stage for assessing the contingencies that can mean success or failure for the project. The model includes a stage for working out the problems in an innovation, but not a stage for clarifying goals. The model presupposes a hierarchical management structure and does not account for the difficult process of reconceptualizing leadership.

The Neptune experience confirmed several key factors that can affect the success or failure of organizational change efforts: a risk-taking culture, empowering leadership, appropriate training, clear goals, adequate resources, and support within the organization. In the organizational theory literature, those factors were generally identified within the context of top-down innovations in hierarchical organizations. In the Neptune experience, those factors are placed within the context of a participant-constructed innovation in a collaborative organization.

Together, the elements of success gleaned from the Neptune experience and the lessons from Rogers begin to suggest a structure that predicts and explains SDM adoption and implementation, but some inconsistencies remain. The primary question remaining seems to center on the initial impetus to undertake the change, especially a change characterized by the uncertainty and ambiguity of SDM and other participant-constructed innovations. Even the most ideal circumstances do not produce changes. Something has to happen to initiate change. As I suggest some elements that might be included in a theory of constructivist organizational change, I will explore a constructivist approach to change that may address the initiation issue.

Toward a Theory of Constructivist Organizational Change

With this study, I viewed Neptune High School's SDM adoption and implementation through the lens of a traditional model of organizational change and found that model wanting. From the Neptune case study I gleaned factors I believe essential for SDM success. I have concluded that the elements essential for SDM success, combined with the problems likely to be encountered with constructivist innovations, add to our knowledge of successful SDM implementation.

What elements would be part of a constructivist theory of organizational change, a theory that would predict and explain the adoption and implementation of SDM? The traditional three-phase change model generally predicts the course of a successful adoption and implementation process. (See Figure 4) An innovation is initiated, implemented, and then becomes an ongoing part of school practice. In the following section, I suggest components of a model of constructivist organizational change, and include a rationale grounded in the change literature, lessons from the Neptune stakeholders, a constructivist approach to organizational change, and SDM studies.

Initiation

The initiation phase of a model of constructivist organizational change may depart significantly from the traditional organizational change model. The origin of an innovation and the impetus for its adoption may be very different from the process suggested by the traditional model. I have outlined what the initiation phase might look like in Figure 4.

It is in this initiation stage that a constructivist approach to organizational change seems to provide some explanatory power, and I will draw on that constructivist perspective to argue that, after an innovation is proposed, building a consensus among stakeholders may be as strong an impetus for change as is the process of agenda-setting and matching problems to solutions.

Proposing. In a traditional model, the first step toward successful implementation is to identify problems, then consider possible solutions that would address those problems. In a constructivist model, the first step may well be the proposal of a solution, without identifying problems. That was the case at Neptune. The source of an innovation may be a needs assessment process, a teacher-driven idea (such as whole language), a university-sponsored idea (such as Accelerated Schools or the Coalition of Essential Schools), an idea from the business world (such as collaborative decision making), or simply an idea whose time has come (such as democracy in schools).

I. Initiation
A. Proposing
B. Building Consensus
(about Beneficiaries & Educational Soundness)
C. Assessing Risk Factors
(Support, Resistance, Time, Culture)

---------Decision to Adopt-----------

II. Implementation
A. Defining, Accommodating
B. Clarifying
(Goals, Processes)
C. Learning, Leading
D. Practicing
III. Institutionalization

Figure 4. Elements of a Modified Theory of Change

Building consensus. It is the constructivist nature of SDM that sets it apart from typical educational change efforts and contributes to the lack of congruency between the traditional change model and the SDM experience. Differences emerge at every stage of change, but particularly during the initiation of the innovation. To help remedy the remaining inconsistencies between SDM implementation and traditional change theory, I turned to the work of Michael Fullan.

Fullan (1991) takes a constructivist approach to organizational change, arguing that participants must determine the meaning and consequences of change for themselves and their situation. Fullan maintains that change, if it is to be lasting and effective, must tap the knowledge and commitment of everyone in the organization, especially those charged with making the change work. When change works, teachers are not passive recipients of a top-down innovation, but collectively construct the meaning of the change. Fullan suggests that substantive change is most likely to occur when educators develop a shared meaning, or consensus, about who will benefit from an innovation and whether or not the innovation is educationally sound.

When I asked respondents who would benefit if SDM was adopted at Neptune, the responses almost always echoed the views of a teacher who said, "We do it for the children, and for ourselves." Respondents said students would benefit from SDM in two specific ways: 1) Their school lives would be a model of democracy and 2) teachers, those most in tune with students, would make important educational decisions.

Teachers, administrators, and parents also expected to be beneficiaries of SDM. When the project began, they told us they expected SDM to provide all stakeholders with a better understanding of school issues and practical constraints. Some teachers, those who felt administrative decisions were too often influenced by a powerful group of insiders, expected SDM to provide equity and access to information and influence. Many stakeholders believed that the school's research and development status in the district was in jeopardy. They believed the school's status would be enhanced by successful implementation of SDM. Some teachers believed SDM would improve inter-departmental communication and lead to better decisions. Apparently, many stakeholders felt problems existed at the school. They revealed their concerns when we asked at the beginning of the study about their expectations for SDM. No forum had existed in the school, however, for an organized assessment of problems.

When I asked stakeholders about the educational soundness of SDM, they offered a variety of responses. Most agreed that SDM represented the best model for school governance. Respondents based their opinions on several factors, including their view of the role of schooling in a democracy, their professional reading, and their experience as educators.

A social studies teacher was particularly adamant about the educational soundness of democracy as a lived experience. He expressed the views of many of his colleagues when he said, "How can we teach democracy when the whole structure and atmosphere of the school is inconsistent with [democracy]?"

A number of Neptune stakeholders had heard about SDM as a restructuring strategy through graduate studies, professional reading, the media, or personal experience. One teacher said, "I read a lot. I've read [about SDM] in educational journals, magazines. I know what's going on." Another teacher said she had read about SDM being successfully applied in other types of institutions. She said that with SDM, schools were "putting into practice principles that are going on in industry, and that have been found to be correct." Another teacher reported hearing "good things about [SDM], positive things about the process and the idea."

Other stakeholders embraced SDM as inherently right and consistent with their experience in education. One teacher said, "If it's a recognition that school-based management, which is really principal-based management, is a disaster and that they need to go back to decisions being made by the professionals (that is, teachers), then SDM is a good idea."

Stakeholders at Neptune did not engage in the process that Rogers described as agenda-setting and matching. They did, however, develop a widespread consensus that students and teachers would benefit from SDM and that SDM was educationally sound. Based on the Neptune experience, which reflects Fullan's constructivist approach to change, I suggest that consensus building may be an essential element during the initiation phase of SDM. Neptune stakeholders agreed that SDM was an educationally sound idea that would benefit students and teachers.

Assessing risk factors. The lessons from Neptune, organizational change theory, and SDM studies all helped me identify factors that facilitate SDM success. Neptune stakeholders did not assess these factors and failure to do so caused frustration and slowed progress. In an ideal situation, schools adopting SDM would, before launching the program, assess such factors as: the level of support they will receive from the district, the strength and nature of support they will receive from the principal, the time available to work on SDM, and the risk-taking threshold of the school's culture.

Neptune stakeholders, throughout the project, said their commitment to SDM perhaps was unwarranted because they received little support from the district. They proceeded with SDM, but always worried that the district would drop SDM or reverse school-made policies.

SDM projects have been plagued by inadequate district support (David, 1989b; Wood & Caldwell, 1991). Collaborative initiatives in business and industry have also been thwarted by inadequate mid- and upper-level management support (Goodstein & Burke, 1991; Kanter, 1983). By suggesting the step of assessing district support in a constructivist model, I am suggesting that districts wanting to initiate SDM must be aware that SDM success is facilitated when the district is committed to SDM and operates in ways that are compatible with school-level SDM.

The support of the principal was essential for SDM success at Neptune, as it has been shown to be at many other schools (Casner-Lotto, 1985; Clune & White, 1988; David, 1989a; Smith & Purkey, 1985). The principal's support comes in many forms and at every stage of the change process: providing information stakeholders need in order to make sound decisions, acquiring resources, supporting the emergence of new leaders, providing time for SDM training, and respecting the decisions of the governing body. These are actions that define empowerment and stakeholders might look for these actions as signs of principal support.

Teachers can effectively resist change efforts they do not like or understand (Weiss, 1992). At Neptune, some teachers resisted SDM, and their actions slowed the SDM process and caused frustration among the school's stakeholders. Acts of resistance included both passive resistance (refusal to participate) and active resistance (attempts to sabotage SDM through behind-the-scenes deals, procedural battles, verbal attacks on colleagues, and anonymous letters to the superintendent). Respondents seemed to agree that about 10% of the faculty resisted SDM and that the resistors were motivated by fear of losing power, unwillingness to change their way of working, or unwillingness to invest the time and energy SDM required.

Stakeholders assessing the potential resistance to SDM would do well to ask the question posed by Sirtonik and Clark (1988): Who benefits from things as they are? At Neptune, high achievers and their parents and teachers were served very well by Neptune before SDM. Neptune's reputation was built in part on the success of the school's high achievers, so that constituency was a potential source of resistance to change. Stakeholders at other schools are more likely to implement SDM successfully if they assess the sources of resistance at their own schools and take steps to address the concerns of all stakeholders.

Successful SDM schools will likely consider whether they have time (and the money to provide time) for SDM-related activities. Stakeholders need time for training, time to hammer out decisions, and time to produce substantive change (Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Moller, 1990; Wood & Caldwell, 1991).

At the end of three years, stakeholders at Neptune had taken only one major decision through the entire SDM process, including identifying the problem, proposing solutions, voting on a solution, and implementing, evaluating, and refining the solution. Of course, other important things happened along the way, such as learning to work together, bringing diverse voices into the school-improvement conversation, re-conceptualizing leadership and roles in the school community, and confronting conflict and disappointment. Significant school improvements, however, were slow in coming. School stakeholders expecting quick and dramatic changes will be surprised at how slow and difficult the change process can be.

Finally, schools instituting SDM must ask what is this school's risk-taking threshold? Research in education and in business and industry confirmed that successful change is most likely when the organization already had developed a risk-taking culture (David, 1989b; Kanter, 1983; Morgan, 1988). The Neptune experience confirmed those findings within the context of a school implementing SDM. Stakeholders defined Neptune as a "can-do" school. Trying out new ideas was a way of life and stakeholders recognized that new ideas sometimes failed. Neptune stakeholders tackled SDM fearlessly and were confident they would succeed.

Ideally, as stakeholders undertake SDM, they will find that the district is organized to support school initiatives, the principal is a collaborative and empowering leader, the resources are at least adequate, and the school community has a strong risk-taking culture. Realistically, conditions may not be ideal, but stakeholders who have assessed these contingencies will be better prepared to implement the innovation successfully.

Implementation

After deciding to adopt an innovation, stakeholders enter the implementation phase of organizational change and will go through several non-sequential stages on the way to successful implementation. Evidence from Neptune, change theory, and SDM studies suggests that stakeholders must define the innovation and adapt it to their own circumstances. If necessary, they must re-organize the school to accommodate the innovation. Schools that are successful will clarify their goals and the process for achieving those goals. Stakeholders will learn new ways of working and new ways of working together. They will also learn new ways of thinking about leadership. The steps of defining and accommodating, clarifying, learning and leading, and practicing may occur and re-occur in different order and may continue after the innovation is institutionalized.

Defining, accommodating. In a traditional model of organizational change, the implicit expectation is that members of an organization will re-define an already defined innovation, then make adjustments in the organization to accommodate the change. The constructivist model rests on the assumption that stakeholders will engage in defining an innovation for themselves.

Innovations have typically arrived at schools with the expectation of only minor modifications at the school site.

Some researchers have expressed concern that anything more than minor modifications would threaten the efficacy of innovations that were carefully researched and developed before they reached the school site (Hall & Hord, 1987). Participant-constructed innovations such as SDM arrive at the school as ideas, concepts, or philosophies that must be defined and actualized by the stakeholders.

However stakeholders define SDM, the organization will almost certainly need to be re-organized to accommodate the new decision-making structure. At Neptune, respondents contrasted the pre- and post-SDM decision-making structure of the school when they said that previously they took their concerns and ideas for change to department chairpersons or to the principal. With SDM in place, they took those concerns and ideas to their SDM representative.

Clarifying. In the traditional model of organizational change, the clarifying stage was a time to work out the problems in an innovation, after which the innovation would become a routine part of the organization. In one sense, that is what happened at Neptune. Stakeholders learned to work collaboratively and adjusted the SDM process to make it work more smoothly. For example, stakeholders created a governance structure through which concerns and ideas were processed and decisions were made and implemented. The structure was not without detractors, because it diluted the power of large departments, but it remained in place and over the years was refined with the addition of parliamentary guidelines and majority-rule imperatives so that most stakeholders came to feel it was fair and responsive. In a larger sense, though, SDM involves an ongoing clarification stage. As players change, the political climate changes, and needs change, SDM has to be continually re-invented.

In the traditional model of organizational change, the clarification of goals is not specifically addressed, unless goal-setting is presumed to be part of the agenda-setting process. At Neptune, as at other schools, the absence of goals impeded SDM progress, so I suggest an expansion of Rogers' "Clarifying" stage, to include clarification of goals and plans for evaluating progress toward those goals.

Neptune stakeholders, even though successful in many aspects of implementing SDM, worked without the benefit of clearly articulated goals to guide their deliberations and actions. Only once during the study did we see a specific reference by a Neptune stakeholder to the district's goals for the SDM project. It is probably not unreasonable to suggest that their work would have been better directed and more easily evaluated if their goals had been clearer. White (1989) found that shared goals led to SDM being more successful as a school improvement strategy. Without those goals, it is difficult to assess SDM's efficacy as a school improvement strategy.

Learning, leading. Learning to make shared decisions is no small task (Moller, 1990) and the value of appropriate training in the skills of collaboration cannot be overemphasized (Diegmueller, 1991; Joyce & Showers, 1983; Katzenmeyer & Reid, 1991). In addition to learning new skills, stakeholders must learn new ways of thinking about leadership and re-define the roles they play in the school community.

Katzenmeyer and Reid (1991) identified two skills necessary for participatory decision making: team training and capacity building. Team training addresses the issues of assertive communication, team work, collaborative decision making, problem solving, conflict management, group dynamics, and task maintenance. Capacity building includes training in listening skills, consensus building, and problem solving. These are the skills of collaboration, the skills successful SDM stakeholders will need.

SDM will flourish with a leader who empowers others to make decisions, assume responsibility for those decisions, and assume leadership roles themselves. An excellent model for leadership in a SDM school is that proposed by Foster (1986). In Foster's model, leadership resides in the community, rather than in a designated person, and is an act, not a role. All members of the community may at times be leaders, and at other times followers. An act of leadership emerges from the context, perhaps centering on a particular issue, and is essentially an act of influence among collaborators. Leadership acts enable rational participation in the life of the school.

Learning to accept new roles is perhaps the most difficult of the tasks SDM stakeholders must master (Diegmueller, 1991; Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1988). Failure to re-define roles and re-invent the idea of leadership will jeopardize SDM success. Appropriate training includes opportunities to learn the skills of collaboration and learn new ways of thinking about roles and leadership in the school community.

Practicing. The opportunity to practice is a fundamental step in leaning new skills (Diegmueller, 1991; Hall & Hord, 1987; Havelock, 1973; Joyce & Showers, 1983). Making shared decisions requires practice, patience, and a recognition that some individuals and some groups will learn faster than others. A history of innovation and teacher input made Neptune a "high readiness" school (well-prepared to undertake SDM) but they still had a lot to learn and they spent a lot of time trying out new skills, learning from their mistakes, and continuing to grow as collaborative educators.

Institutionalization

If an innovation is institutionalized, it becomes part of the normal operation of the school. But, as with the initiation phase, this last phase in the change process is particularly problematic.

In traditional models of change, theorists assumed a somewhat static situation in which the accomplishment of the change was accompanied by a sense of closure, a "fait accompli." Because the participant-constructed innovations aim for long-term, adaptive, and reflective change, the institutionalization exists in a dynamic state. Stakeholders may find themselves recycling through stages in the implementation phase even after the innovation becomes normal school practice.

Organizational context presents another problem for the last phase of change. As long as schools are imbedded in bureaucratic hierarchies that are in turn imbedded in political entities, substantive changes that empower stakeholders may be characterized by uncertainty.

After two years of work and countless hours of thoughtful, and sometimes painful, deliberations, Neptune stakeholders presented a proposal to the superintendent that he summarily rejected. Respondents used words such as "blind-sided," "demoralized," and "devastated," to describe the effect of the superintendent's decision. Many stakeholders were unprepared for the rejection, having put aside some of their initial distrust and participated in good faith in the decision-making process. They were frustrated and discouraged.

The lesson concerning "institutionalization" from the Neptune stakeholders seems to be one of caution. Stakeholders have maintained the SDM structure and continue to address issues through that structure. SDM is certainly an ongoing part of school practice. However, stakeholders are wary of district-level support for school-level decisions.

When we visited Neptune during the fourth year of SDM, stakeholders told us that they were not addressing new issues. The organizational context had become a factor as deliberations were almost completely consumed by state-mandated restructuring requirements. The district bureaucracy posed another threat to SDM when district officials attempted, unsuccessfully, to remove the SDM principal.

Respondents said democracy lives at Neptune, but stakeholders dare not take it for granted. They learned Friere's (1986) insight that freedom is never a gift. Freedom must be valued, fought for, won, nurtured, and jealously guarded. Likewise, innovations that empower stakeholders must be institutionalized, but not without understanding, struggle, and vigilance.

Implications of the Study

With this study, I sought to identify factors that contribute to successful implementation of SDM and to explore a theoretical framework that would predict and explain the process. Staff developers (an inclusive term for change agents, consultants, or human resource staffers) and researchers have a stake in the results of the study.

Implications for Staff Development

With SDM, stakeholders bring their collective knowledge and expertise to the solution of school problems and implement those solutions with the confidence and commitment that comes only with ownership. Staff developers who can provide training in the skills of collaboration and help stakeholders to accept new roles in school decision making can foster the implementation of SDM.

Staff developers and agencies sponsoring change must find that balance between the need to let participants construct the meaning of change, and the need to guide organizations through the change process. As one teacher put it, "You have to decide, are you going to tell them [what they are getting into], or are you going to let them go through hell [figuring it out for themselves]." Staff developers can help stakeholders learn from the experience of others while allowing each group to reflect on the meaning of SDM for their own school.

The skills required for participant-constructed innovations are the skills of collaborative organizations. Teachers, who typically work in isolation, must learn how to work together, how to manage conflict, how to provide a risk-free forum for ideas, how to run meetings, how to gather data. The staff developers' repertoire of skills must encompass the teaching and coaching of group process skills and group dynamics.

Effective staff development must include district-level administrators and bureaucrats. As one Neptune teacher said, "Don't even start at the school level." Just as with school stakeholders, district administrators must learn the skills of collaboration and must learn new ways of thinking about leadership.

Implications for Change Research

Based on the Neptune experience and findings from organizational change research and SDM studies, I have proposed elements of a theory of constructivist organizational change. Further, I have suggested that SDM is representative of a genre of innovations, described as participant-constructed innovations, whose adoption and implementation may be explained by a model of constructivist change. The most obvious questions that emerge, then, are these: Are the elements I have included appropriate? Would the model predict and explain the adoption and implementation of SDM in another setting? Would the model predict and explain the adoption and implementation of other innovations in the genre?

The evidence suggests that an organization undertaking SDM implementation does not follow the traditional model of change. I have maintained that it is the constructivist nature of SDM that demands an alternative explanation. The explanatory power of the elements of a theory of constructivist change that I have suggested need to be tested within the context of SDM or another participant-constructed innovation.

It may well be that, after becoming a collegial, collaborative organization, achieving stakeholder ownership of problems and solutions, and assuming new roles and learning new ways of working together, stakeholders will choose to adopt well-researched and carefully developed innovations to improve student achievement. As they implement solutions at their schools, stakeholders may follow a traditional model of organizational change, but adoption and implementation of the original facilitating innovation requires the explanatory power of a model of constructivist organizational change.

APPENDIX A
PROJECT INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

During the last 10 years Florida has emerged as a national leader in the movement to improve the quality of public education. One of the most interesting and hopeful innovations happening in Florida and elsewhere is shared decision making. The goals of shared decision making vary, but in Seabreeze County the aims are clear: to professionalize teaching further and to affect student achievement positively.

Seabreeze County's shared decision making program is unique because it includes a formative evaluation component. Formative evaluation means that the program can be modified, refined, and improved as you go along because the faculty will have information to help assess school needs and plan innovations. The aim of this formative evaluation is not simply to determine whether a particular program "works," or to compare schools and grade the work of individual institutions or people. The aim is to develop an implementation model that fits your school and helps other schools when they undertake shared decision making in the future.

I am a staff member form the R&D Center for School Improvement at the University of Florida, and I have been assigned to your school. I will be working with the three core group members and with another teacher who will be a liaison or research contact person for your school. In addition, I will talk with other teachers, students, parents, administrators, staff members, and shared decision making council members throughout this school year. Some interviews may be done by phone and will not take much of your time. I will be asking questions about shared decision making, how the program is proceeding, what you think of the program, what you hope might be accomplished, problems that must be surmounted, and more. I will collect and analyze the responses of many people and give short reports back to the school core group and to district trainers.

It is important for you to know that reports will never include the names of the people I interview. In fact, respondents will be given a form indicating that all information is confidential and that names are never divulged, regardless of the information received. We understand that confidentiality is important to the success of the evaluation and the project.

At the end of the school year, we will write a report on the implementation process of shared decision making Seabreeze County schools. We will provide information about the development of the school plans, the problems, encountered and their resolutions, the common steps or stages in the implementation process, the school characteristics that influence the successful launching of the program, and what shared decision making came to mean to teachers and administrators.

Since this program emphasizes teacher participation, the success of this evaluation process, like the success of the shared decision making program itself, depends on you. We look forward to working with you.

APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORM

University of Florida
Research and Development Center for School Improvement
Shared Decision Making Pilot Project

The purpose of this project is to describe and evaluate the process of implementation of the pilot project of shared decision making in six schools in Seabreeze County.

I understand that I will be interviewed privately for approximately 45 minutes and if I consent the interview will be audiotaped. I can refuse to answer any question I do not choose to answer and I can withdraw my consent and participation i this interview at any time. My participation is voluntary and is without payment. My anonymity will be protected as required by law and I will not be identified by name. The tape recording of my interview will be erased at the end of the project. Only members of the University of Florida research team will have access to the transcript of my interview.

I understand that University of Florida doctoral candidates will be drawing on interview data in the writing of their dissertations. Any data so used will be completely anonymous and confidential. No references will be made to specific persons or schools.

I have read and understood the procedure described above. I agree to participate in this project and I have received a copy of this description.

Signed:

Person Interviewed	Date
Researcher	Date

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW SCRIPTS

First Site Visit 1989-90

1. What does shared decision making mean to you at this point in the project?
    - -What do you want to know about it?
    - -What possibilities do you see for SDM?
    - -Who should be involved?
    - -What kinds of decisions should be made collaboratively in schools?
    - -Are there some kinds of decisions you personally prefer not to take part in?
    - -Are there some kinds of decisions that should be left to individual teachers?

2. How did you first hear about this project?
    - -What were your initial thoughts?
    - -Why do you think teachers at this school voted to participate in this project?
    - -Were there any teachers opposed to participation? Why?
    - -Do yo have reservations or worries?
    - -Why do you think the union agreed to this project?
    - -Why do you think the district agreed to this project?
    - -Why do you think this school was selected to participate?

3. Is this a new idea at this school? Has there been any kind of shared decision making in the past?
    - -How have decisions been made in the past?
    - -What kinds of decisions have teachers participated in?
    - -How has their participation been obtained?

4. What is your understanding of the purpose of SDM?
    - -What do you hope SDM will accomplish at Neptune?
    - -What do you really think it will accomplish?
    - -What kinds of things will be done in the first year or two?
    - -Do you think other teachers have the same expectations?

5. Are there any changes that you think need to be made in your school in order for this project to be successful?
    - -Are there any changes that yo think need to be make

in the school district in order for this project to be successful?

6. What are the strengths of this school?
    - How do you think this school is different from other schools?
    - Why do you think your school has these strengths?

7. What problems are faced in this school?
    - What are the most difficult problems you face in trying to teach your students?
    - What kinds of problems are faced by your administrators? Will this project address those problems?
    - What kinds of problems do students in this school face? Will this project address those problems?
    - What do you see as your role in this project?
    - What conditions must be present for this project to be successful?

8. Who are the key people on the faculty without whose support shared decision making will not get off the ground?

Second Site Visit, 1989-90

1. What is going on in SDM in your school?

2. What are your impressions so far?

3. What structures have been set up to facilitate SDM?

4. How do those structures seem to be working"

5. How were those structures determined? Are you satisfied with the way they were determined?

6. What difference do yo think SDM will make in the next three or four years at Neptune?

7. Have you had any meetings about SDM?

8. Do you see any problems in the SDM effort that might limit its effectiveness? Do you have any worries about SDM?

9. Have your views on SDM changed over the past year? How so?

10. What about the views of other faculty members? Are people more informed now that they were? Are they more or less hopeful?

11. Are some people enthusiastic about SDM? If so, why? Are some people skeptical about SDM? Of so, why? Where do you stand?

12. What needs to be done in the short run to get SDM up and running?

13. What needs to be done in the long run to improve the SDM effort at you school?

14. [Core group only] What kinds of help have you received from the SDM office? What could that office do to help you get SDM going at your school?

First Site Visit 1990-91

1. What is going on in SDM at Neptune?

2. What are the long-term aims or goals for SDM at Neptune?

3. What are your impressions of SDM so far?

4. Has your school identified specific issues that will be addressed through SDM this year?
    -What are they?
    -Are they being addressed?
    -What has been done so far?

5. What has been accomplished so far?
    -Do teachers have a greater understanding of SDM than they did this time last year?
    -Have teacher/administrator relations improved?
    -Has communication improved?
    -Has SDM given teachers more say in school decisions?
    -Has SDM improved teacher morale?
    -Has SDM done anything for students?

6. Let's talk about the governance structure.
    -Describe it.
    -How is it working?
    -Any changes since last year?
    -Any new problems or difficulties?
    -If there are problems, are they being addressed?

    -What role do council members play in SDM?
    -What role does the faculty play in SDM?

7. Are there any significant stumbling blocks that stand in the way of SDM being successful at Neptune?
    -If so, what are they and are they being addressed?

8. Have your views on SDM changed over the past year? How so? Why? What about other faculty members? Have their views changed?

9. What needs to be done in the long run to improve the SDM effort at your school?

Second Site Visit, 1990-91

1. What is going on in SDM this year at Neptune?

2. What are the long-term aims or goals for SDM?

3. What are your impressions of SDM so far?

4. Did your school identify specific issues that were addressed through SDM this year?
    - -What were they?
    - -How did they turn out?

5. Are there any significant achievements so far?
    - -(Probe for specifics)

6. Has there been a decision made through SDM this year? What was it? Can you walk me through the SDM process that was used to make this decision?

7. Is the present governance structure working?
    - -How is it working?
    - -Is it an improvement or not?

8. Has communication improved at Neptune since SDM?
    - -Trust level?
    - -Faculty-administration relations?
    - -Faculty morale?
    - -Faculty participation in decision making?
    - -Student achievement?

9. What is the role of the principal in a SDM school?

10. Does the faculty have a good understanding of SDM now? Do teachers support it?

11. Have your view on SDM changed over the year?
    - -How so? Why?
    - -What about the views of other faculty members?
    - -Are people more - or less - hopeful that they were?
    - -Are some people enthusiastic about SDM? Why?
    - -Are some people resistant to SDM? Why? What needs to be done before these people will support SDM?

-Are some people taking a wait-and-see attitude? What needs to be done before these people will support SDM?

12. What does the term restructuring mean to you?
    -Has restructuring been discussed at Neptune?
    -Have you begun to restructure parts of Neptune?

13. Imagine that faculty had enough time to talk together and do some thoughtful planning. Imagine, too, that you were free to design the best school possible within the limits of your present budget. Imagine that you could get waivers form any policies you did not believe served the best interests of students. Do yo believe that this faculty could design a school that would significantly improve student achievement or faculty morale? How would you change this school? What stands in your way?

14. What training would you suggest for the next tier of SDM schools?

15. Are you represented on the council? Do you get feedback and provide input through your representative?

First Site Visit, 1991-92

1. What is going on in SDM at Neptune?
    -Any significant changes?
    -What issues are being addressed through SDM?
    -Any specific accomplishments so far?
    -What happened in response to the unions "work to the rule" policy?

2. Did your school apply for a policy waiver last year?
    -What did they ask for?
    -What happened?
    -How do you feel about the waiver process? How do others feel?

3. Has SDM changed things at this school?
    -Any effect on faculty morale? Are people working more cooperatively?
    -Do you believe you personally have more say in decisions than you did before SDM?
    -Has communication improved?
    -Is the governance structure working?
    -People think about the purpose of SDM in different ways. What do you see as the ultimate goal(s) of SDM at Neptune?

4. Let's talk about how people define their jobs since SDM.
    -Has SDM changed the role of the principal in any way?

- -What about the role of teachers? Or parents? Staff?

5. If you wanted to initiate a change at Neptune, what would you do?
   - -How is that different than what you would have done before SDM?
   - -Has SDM made you think more about the possibility of change?

6. About the role of council members:
   - -Who are the leaders?
   - -Are they the same people who were leaders before SDM or have new leaders emerged?
   - -What difficulties do SDM leaders face?
   - -What motivates people to take a leadership role in SDM?
   - -What are some of the characteristics of SDM faculty leaders?
   - -Are these characteristics different from the characteristics of effective faculty leaders before SDM?

7. What does SDM mean to you now?
   - -Where does your definition fall on a continuum between "providing input" and actually making and implementing decisions?

8. Who do you think will benefit from SDM? How will they benefit?

9. Concerning the costs of implementing SDM:
   - -What has been the personal cost?
   - -What about the costs to the larger school community?

10. Does the benefit or potential benefit outweigh the cost?

11. Of the various "solution" being proposed for restructuring schools, why do you think this county and the union selected SDM for their restructuring effort?
    - -Would SDM have been your choice?
    - -Are other, perhaps better, innovations being ignored while energy and resources are invested in SDM?

12. Do you know of evidence that SDM is an educationally sound, well-researched innovation worthy of your time and energy to implement?
    - -Have you heard of it being effective in other places?
    - -Have you read about SDM being employed effectively in enterprises other than schools?

13. Has SDM resulted in fundamental changes in beliefs or practices at this school?

14. Now that Neptune has been involved in implementing SDM for two years, do you feel that you had a clear idea at the beginning about what would be involved?
    -Has it been a much more complex - or easier - process than anticipated?

Second Site Visit, 1991-92

1. What is going on with SDM at Neptune?
    -Any significant changes?
    -What issues are being addressed?
    -Any specific accomplishments so far?
    -Any significant problems or stumbling blocks?

2. Has SDM changed anything at this school?
    -Any effect on teacher morale to cooperation?
    -Do you feel that you personally have more say in decisions now?
    -Has communication improved?
    -Have faculty-administration relations improved?
    -Is the governance structure working?
    -What is the goal of SDM at Neptune?

3. What about the way people define their roles?
    -Has SDM changed the role of the principal?
    -What about the role of teachers, parents, or staff?
    -Has SDM changed your role in any way?

4. About SDM leaders:
    -Who are the SDM leaders? Are they the same people who were leaders before SDM?
    -What are characteristics of effective SDM leaders?
    -Are these characteristics different from the faculty leaders before SDM?
    -What do you think motivates people to be SDM leaders?

5. What are the strengths of this school?

6. What are the weaknesses of this school?

7. What is your assessment of SDM at this school?
    -Has SDM been worthwhile? Explain.
    -What advice would you give to a school that is considering moving in to SDM?

8. What do you know about the evaluation process?
    -Have you read any of the status reports? If so, what did you think of them? Were they helpful? Accurate?
    -Have might have been done to improve the

evaluation process?

9. [Shared meaning questions]
   - -Who will benefit from SDM? How will they benefit?
   - -Do you feel that you had realistic expectations of what would be involved in implementing SDM? Any particular surprises?
   - -Do you feel that SDM is an educationally sound, well thought out strategy for restructuring schools?
   - -Of the solutions being offered by various groups for improving schools, would SDM be your first choice? Why?

10. If you wanted to initiate a change at Neptune, what would you do?
    - -How is that different than what you would have done before SDM?
    - -Has SDM made you think more about the possibility of change?

11. Did your school apply for a policy waiver this year or is it considering such an application?
    - -What did you ask for and why?
    - -What happened?
    - -How did you feel about the waiver process? How do others feel?

12. What do you think will happen with the SDM project in the future?
    - -At Neptune?
    - -At the district level?

APPENDIX D
CATEGORIES FOR DATA ANALYSYS

These categories aimed at providing a description of Neptune High School (NHS):

NHS: purpose
NHS: students
NHS: faculty
NHS: parents
NHS: culture
NHS: relationship with district
NHS: ways students refer to adults
NHS: facilities
NHS: union influence
NHS: principal
NHS: prior decision-making structure
NHS: micropolitical issues
NHS: ways adults refer to students

These categories aimed at providing a description of shared decision making at Neptune:

What's happening?/Events
SDM: definition
SDM: parameters
SDM: previous knowledge
SDM: how it was introduced
SDM: concerns
SDM: goals
SDM: micropolitical issues
SDM: who introduced it
SDM: who will benefit? how?
SDM: educationally sound?
SDM: evidence of differentiated leadership
SDM: principal's role
SDM: students' role
SDM: parents' role
SDM: staff role
SDM: anticipated benefits
SDM: benefits, realized
SDM: anticipated barriers
SDM: barriers, realized
SDM: facilitating factors, anticipated
SDM: facilitating factors, realized

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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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